

HISTORY OF EUROPE

DURING

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

“**BELLUM** maxime omnium memorabile, quæ unquam gesta sint, me scripturum ; quod, Hannibale duce, Carthaginienses cum populo Romano gessere. Nam neque validiores opibus ullæ inter se civitates gentesque contulerunt arma, neque his ipsis tantum unquam virium aut roboris fuit : et haud ignotas belli artes inter se, sed expertas primo Punico conserebant bello ; odiis etiam prope majoribus certarunt, quam viribus ; et adeo varia belli fortuna ancepsque Mars fuit, ut propius periculum fuerint, qui vicerunt.”—LIV. lib. 21.

HISTORY OF EUROPE

FROM THE

COMMENCEMENT OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

IN M.DCC.LXXXIX.

TO THE RESTORATION OF THE BOURBONS

IN M.DCCC.XV.

BY ARCHIBALD ALISON, F.R.S.E.

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HISTORY OF EUROPE.

CHAPTER LXIV.

DOMESTIC HISTORY OF GREAT BRITAIN FROM
1809 TO 1812.

THE reign of George III. embraces, beyond all question, the most eventful and important period in the annals of mankind. Whether we regard the changes in society, and in the aspect of the world, which occurred during its continuance, or the illustrious men who arose in Great Britain and the adjoining states during its progress, it must ever form an era of unexampled interest. Its commencement was coeval with the glories of the Seven Years' War, and the formation, on a solid basis, of the vast colonial empire of Great Britain; its meridian witnessed the momentous conflict for American independence, and the growth, amidst Transatlantic wilds, of European civilisation; its latter days were involved in the heart-stirring conflicts of the French Revolution, and immortalised by the military exploits of Napoleon. The transition from the opening of this reign to its termination, is not merely that from one century to the next, but from one age of the world to another. New elements of fearful energy were brought into operation in the moral world during its continuance, and new principles for the government of mankind established, never again

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1.
Vast importance and interest of the reign of George III.

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to be shaken. The civilisation of a new world, in this age, was contemporary with the establishment of new principles for the government of the old. In its eventful days were combined the growth of Grecian democracy with the passions of Roman ambition; the fervour of plebeian zeal with the pride of aristocratic power; the blood of Marius with the genius of Cæsar; the opening of a hemisphere equal to that which rewarded the enterprise of Columbus, with the rise of a social agent, in the powers of steam, as mighty as the press.

2.
Great characters which were grouped around the throne of George III.

But if new elements were called into action in the social world, of surpassing strength and energy, in the course of this memorable reign, still more remarkable were the characters which rose to eminence during its continuance. The military genius, unconquerable courage, and enduring constancy of Frederick; the ardent mind, burning eloquence, and lofty patriotism of Chatham; the incorruptible integrity, sagacious intellect, and philosophic spirit of Franklin; the disinterested virtue, prophetic wisdom, and imperturbable fortitude of Washington; the masculine understanding, feminine passions, and blood-stained ambition of Catharine, would alone have been sufficient to have given this era, for good or for evil, immortality. But bright as was its commencement, its first lustre was as nothing to that which subsequently appeared. Then were to be seen the rival minds of Pitt and Fox, which, emblematic of the antagonist powers which then convulsed mankind, shook the British senate by their vehemence, and roused the spirit destined ere long, on behalf of the dearest interests of humanity, to array the world in arms: then the great soul of Burke cast off the unworthy fetters of ambition or party, and, fraught with a giant's force and a prophet's wisdom, regained its place in the cause of mankind: then the arm of Nelson cast its thunderbolts on every shore, and preserved unscathed in the deep the ark of European freedom; and, ere the reign expired, the wisdom of Wellington had erected an impassable barrier to Gallic ambition, and said even to the deluge of imperial power, "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." Nor were splendid genius, heroic virtue, gigantic wickedness, wanting on the opposite side of this heart-stirring conflict.

Mirabeau had thrown over the morning of the French Revolution the brilliant but deceitful light of democratic genius : Danton had coloured its noon with the passions and the energy of tribunitian power : Carnot had exhibited the combination, rare in a corrupted age, of republican energy with private virtue : Robespierre had darkened its evening by the blood and agony of fanatical ambition : Napoleon had risen like a meteor over its night, dazzled the world by the brightness of his genius and the lustre of his deeds, and lured its votaries, by the deceitful blaze of glory, to perdition.

In calmer pursuits, in the tranquil walks of science and literature, the same age was, beyond all others, fruitful in illustrious men. Dr Johnson, the strongest intellect and the most profound observer of the eighteenth century : Gibbon, the architect of a bridge over the dark gulf which separates ancient from modern times, whose vivid genius has tinged with brilliant colours the greatest historical work in existence : Hume, whose simple but profound History will be coeval with the long and eventful thread of English story : Robertson, who first threw over the maze of human events the light of philosophic genius, and the spirit of enlightened reflection : Gray, whose burning thoughts have been condensed in words of more than classic beauty : Burns, whose lofty soul spread its own pathos and dignity over the "short and simple annals of the poor : " Smith, who called into existence a new science, fraught with the dearest interests of humanity, and unfolded many of its principles in a single lifetime : Reid, who carried into the recesses of the human mind the torch of reason : Stewart, who cast a luminous glance over the philosophy of mind, and warmed the inmost recesses of metaphysical inquiry by the delicacy of taste and the glow of eloquence : Watt, who added an unknown power to the resources of art, and in the regulated force of steam discovered the means of approximating the most distant parts of the earth—such names and achievements as these have rendered this period one for ever memorable in the annals of scientific acquisition and literary greatness.

But when the stormy day of revolution commenced, and the passions were excited by political convulsion, the human mind took a different direction ; and these names,

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3.
Its character
as regards the
illustrious
and literary
men who
flourished
during it.

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4.
When the
French Revolution
arose.

great as they are, were rivalled by others of a wider range and a bolder character. Scott then entranced the world by the creations of fancy ; and diving deep into the human heart, clothed alike the manners of chivalry and the simplicity of the cottage with the colours of poetry, the glow of patriotism, and the dignity of virtue : Byron burst the barriers of wealth and fashion ; and, reviving in an artificial age the fire of passion, the thrill of excitement, and the charm of pathos, awakened in many a breast, long alive only to corrupted pleasures, the warmth of pity and the glow of admiration : * Campbell infused the visions of hope and the fervour of philanthropy, with the sublimity of poetic thought and the energy of lyrical expression ; and, striking deep into the human heart, alone of all the poets of the age, has, like Shakspeare and Milton, transplanted his own thought and expression into the ordinary language of the people : Southey, embracing the world in his grasp, arrayed the heroism of duty, and the constancy of virtue, with the magnificence of Eastern imagination and the strains of inspired poetry : while the genius of Moore, casting off the unworthy associations of its earlier years, fled back to its native regions of the sun, and blended the sentiment and elevation of the West with the charms of Oriental imagery and the brilliancy of Asiatic thought.

5.
Religious
character
which at
length char-
acterised the
period.

But the genius of these men, great and immortal as it was, did not arrive at the bottom of things. They shared in the animation of passing events, and were roused by the storm which shook the world ; but they did not reach the secret caves whence the whirlwind issued, nor perceive what spirit had let loose the tempest upon the earth. In the bosom of retirement, in the recesses of solitary thought, the awful source was discovered, and the Æolus stood forth revealed in the original Antagonist Power of wickedness. The thought of Coleridge, even during the whirl of passing events, discovered their hidden springs, and poured forth, in an obscure style, and to an unheeding age, the great moral truths which

* It is only, however, to his descriptions of nature, and a few of his reflections, that this high praise is due. Generally speaking, his sentiments and characters exhibit a chaos of ill-regulated passion, which never will be intelligible or interesting but to the spoiled children of fashion or self-indulgence—that is, to a limited portion of mankind.

were then proclaiming in characters of fire to mankind : Wordsworth, profound and contemplative, clothed the lessons of wisdom in the simplicity of immortal verse : Mackintosh, rising like Burke, in maturer years, above the generous delusions of his yet inexperienced life, wanted only greater industry, and a happy exemption from London society, to have rivalled Thucydides in the depth of his views, and a biographer like Boswell, to have equalled Johnson in the fame of his conversation : while Chalmers, bringing to the cause of truth and the interests of humanity a prophet's fire and an orator's genius, discerned in the indifferent or irreligious spirit of the former age the real cause of the dangers of the present ; and in the spread of Christian instruction, and the prevalence of religious principle, the only power that ever has, or ever will, successfully combat, either in political or social evils, the seductions of passion, the delusions of error, and the powers of wickedness.

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The French and German writers, justly proud of the literary fame of their own countries during this memorable reign, will hardly allow that their illustrious authors should be grouped around the throne of George III. ; and will point rather to the Revolution, the empire of Napoleon, or the War of Independence, as marking the period on continental Europe. But by whatever name it is called, the era is the same ; and if we detach ourselves for a moment from the rivalry of nations, and anticipate the time in future days when Europe presents itself to the rest of the world as a luminous spot, exceeding even Greece in lustre, and from whence the blessings of civilisation and the light of religion ray out over the globe, we shall feel reason to be astonished at the brightness of the light which then shone forth in the world. It is pleasing to dwell on the contemplation. As with the age of Pericles in Grecian, or of Augustus in Roman story, it will never again be equalled in European history ; but the most distant ages will dwell upon it with rapture, and by its genius the remotest generations of mankind will be blessed.

6.
Brilliant
character of
this period.

In no age of the world has the degrading effect of long-continued prosperity, and the regenerating influence of difficulty and suffering on human thought, been more clearly evinced. The latter part of the eighteenth cen-

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7.

Degraded
moral char-
acter of
French liter-
ature at the
commence-
ment of the
period.

tury, the reigns of Louis XV., the Regent Orleans, and Louis XVI., had been characterised by a flood of selfishness and corruption, the sure forerunners in the annals of nations of external disaster or internal ruin. Fancy was applied only to give variety to the passions—genius to inflame, by the intermixture of sentiment, the seductions of the senses—talent to assail the Creator from whom it sprang. The great powers of Voltaire, capable, as his tragedies demonstrate, of the most exalted as well as varied efforts, were perverted by the spirit of the age in which he lived. He wrote for individual celebrity, not for eternal truth; and he obtained, in consequence, the natural reward of such conduct—unbounded present fame, and in some respects undeserved permanent neglect.* The ardent and more elevated, but unsteady mind of Rousseau disdained such degrading bondage. The bow, bent too far one way, recoiled too far another; and the votaries of fashion, in an artificial age and a corrupted capital, were roused by the eloquent declamations of the recluse of Meillerie on the pristine equality of mankind, the social contract, and the original dignity of the savage character. Raynal, deducing the principles of humanity from the wrong source, traced with persuasive fervour, but with no prophetic foresight, the establishments of the Europeans in the two hemispheres; and, blind to the mighty change which it was ordained to effect in the condition of the species, sought to deduce from the commencement of the causes ordained to spread the Christian faith over the wilderness of nature, arguments against its celestial origin.

Every department of thought save one, was tainted by the general wickedness, and the blindness to all but present objects, which prevailed. Man's connexion with his Maker was broken off by the French apostles of freedom; for they declared there was no God in whom to trust in the great

* Every bookseller in France and England will now bear testimony to the fact, that there is no voluminous writer whose works remain so dead a stock as those of Voltaire; and this is decisively proved by the extremely low price which the numerous editions of his writings bear. His tragedies are noble efforts of genius, and will live for ever; but his romances have already descended to the vault of all the Capulets. His historical works, compared with those in France which followed the Revolution, appear lifeless and uninteresting. His sceptical dogmas, so far from being regarded as the speculations of a powerful mind in advance, are now seen to have been the blindness of a deluded one in rear, of the momentous age to which his later years were prolonged.

struggle for liberty. "Humanimmortality," says Channing, "that truth which is the seed of all greatness, they derided. To their philosophy man was a creature of chance, a compound of matter, a worm soon to rot and perish for ever. France failed in her attempts for freedom, through the want of that moral preparation for the exercise of its powers, without which its blessings cannot be secured. Liberty was tainted by their touch, polluted by their breath; and yet we trusted it was to rise in health and glory from their embrace."¹ In the exact sciences alone, dependent upon intellect only, the native dignity of the human mind was asserted; and the names of D'Alembert, La Grange, and La Place, will remain to the end of the world, among those who, in the loftiest subjects of purely intellectual inquiry, have extended and enlarged the boundaries of knowledge.

But more animating times were approaching. Corruption had produced its inevitable fruits; and adversity, with its renovating influence, was about to pass over the world. The Revolution came, with its disasters and its passions; its overthrow of thrones and destruction of altars; its woes, its blood, and its suffering. In the general deluge thus suddenly falling on a sinful world, the mass of mankind in all ranks still clung to their former vices. They were, as of old, marrying and giving in marriage, when the waters burst upon them. But the ark of salvation had been prepared by more than mortal hands. The handwriting on the wall was perceived by the gifted few to whom Providence had unlocked the fountains of original thought; and in the highest class of intellect was soon to be discerned the elevating influence of trial and suffering upon the human mind. While the innumerable votaries of Revolution, borne along on the fetid stream which had burst from the corruptions of previous manners, were bending before the altar of reason, Chateaubriand ventured to raise again, amidst the sneers of an infidel age, the standard of the ancient faith; and devoted the energies of an intrepid, and the genius of an ardent mind, to demonstrate its relation to all that is beautiful, and great, and elevating, both in the moral and material world. Madame de Staël, albeit nursed in the atmosphere of philanthropic delusion, and bred up with filial piety at the feet of Gamaliel, arose, amidst the tears

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8.
Selfishness
was the gan-
grene which
had tainted
it.

¹ Character
of Napoleon.

9.

Influence of
the French
Revolution
on general
thought in
France.

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10.
Subsequent
improvement
originating in
suffering.

of humanity, to nobler principles ; combined the refinements of sentiment with the warmth of eloquence and the delicacy of taste, and first announced, in a philosophic survey of human affairs, the all-important truth, that there are but two eras in the history of the species—that which preceded and that which followed the establishment of Christianity.

Seeds, whether for good or evil, sown in the human mind, generally take half a century to bring their fruit to maturity ; and in the general profligacy and irreligion of the urban population in France since the Revolution, is to be discerned the havoc prepared by the labours of Voltaire and the Encyclopædists, and the long-continued corruption of previous literature. But the nobler fruits of the suffering of the Revolution are already apparent in the highest class of intellect, whence change, whether for good or evil, ever originates. Guizot has brought to the history of civilisation the light of true philosophy and the glow of enlightened religion : Cousin, in the midst of philanthropic labour and vast information on the vital question of education, has arrived at the eternal truth, that general instruction, if not based on Christian principle, is rather hurtful than beneficial, because it opens new avenues to moral corruption without providing the only antidote which experience has proved to be effectual in correcting it : Lamartine, gifted at once with an orator's fervour and a poet's fire, has traced in strains of almost redundant beauty the steps of an enlightened European pilgrim to the birthplace of our religion and the cradle of our race, and the deluded efforts of Girondist ambition in overturning monarchy in France. May the seeds scattered by these illustrious men not fall on a barren soil and perish by the way side, nor yet be choked amidst briars ; but bring forth good fruit, in some fifty, in some eighty, and in some an hundred fold ! *

* Sir James Mackintosh, thirty years ago, noted this remarkable change in French literature, and deplored that it had not then made its appearance amongst English writers : — " Twenty years ago," says he, " the state of opinion seemed to indicate an almost total destruction of religion in Europe. Ten years ago, the state of political events appeared to show a more advanced stage in the progress towards such a destruction. The reaction has begun every where. A mystical spirit prevails in Germany ; a poetical religion is patronised by men of genius in France. It is adopted in some measure by Madame de Staël, who finds it, even by the help of her reason, in the nature of man, if she cannot so deeply perceive it in the nature of things. In England no traces of this tendency

Germany is a younger branch of the same illustrious family ; but from the time that her language has been cultivated by native writers, she has advanced in the great race of mind with extraordinary rapidity. Last of the European surface to be turned up by the labours of the husbandman, her soil has been found to teem with the richness of a virgin mould, and to exhibit the sparkling of hitherto untouched treasures. In reading the recent poets and great prose writers of that country, we feel as if we had arrived at a new mine of intellectual wealth : the Gothic nations, with fresh ideas and powerful expression, have again regenerated the almost exhausted world of thought ; the giants of the North have indeed burst in and mended the puny breed. However it may be explained, the fact is sufficiently proved by the most cursory survey of the history of mankind, that the human mind is never quiescent : that it frequently lies fallow, as it were, for a long succession of ages ; but that, during such periods, former error is forgotten, and ancient chains worn off. Original thought is never so powerful, and important truth never so clearly revealed, as when the light of day is first let in to hitherto unexplored regions of the mind. The ages of Bacon and Shakspeare in England ; of Dante and Leonardo da Vinci in Italy ; of Pascal and Descartes in France, are sufficient to demonstrate the general justice of this proposition.

Long illustrious in the walks of philosophy, holding for centuries a distinguished place in the republic of science ; the birthplace of printing and gunpowder, the two most powerful agents in the cause of freedom ever communicated to mankind ; * the country of Kepler, of Euler and Leibnitz, Germany had not till the last half century explored the riches of her own tongue, or devel-

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11.
Literature of
Germany
during the
same period.

12.
Great poets
of Germany.

are discoverable among men of letters—perhaps because they never went so near the opposite extreme, *perhaps, also, because they have not suffered from the same misfortunes.*—MACKINTOSH'S *Memoirs*, i. 408. What a curious and instructive passage to be written thirty years ago, midway between the experience of the French and the commencement of the English revolution ! The days of anxiety, contest, and suffering have come to England, from the effects of that very organic change in which Sir James Mackintosh himself, in his later days, against his better judgment, was led to concur ; and, with them, the resurrection of the religious spirit in the works of philosophy, literature, and philanthropy, of the want of which he was then led to complain.

* Of printing, this will be generally admitted ; of gunpowder, at present, as generally denied. This is not the place to demonstrate the proposition : the experience of a few generations will place it beyond a doubt.

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oped in native literature the novel and fervent ideas which had long been working in her bosom. But this was at length done; and her literature started at once into life with the vigour of youthful energy, and the strength of an armed man. Klopstock, obscure but sublime, poured forth the spirit of mystical christianity in touching and immortal strains. Goethe, simple yet profound, united the depth of philosophical thought to the simplicity of childish affection; and, striking with almost inspired felicity the chord of native reflection, produced that mingled flood of poetic meditation and individual observation, which has rendered his fame unbounded in the Fatherland. Wieland, without the religious fervour of the first of these writers, or the deep reflection of the second, has charmed every imagination by the brightness of his fancy, the richness of his language, and the sparkling freshness which he has thrown over all the subjects which his pen has touched: Schiller, uniting the ardour of a soldier to the soul of a statesman and the hand of a historian, has portrayed the shades of former times with dramatic power, and in a noble spirit: while the soul of Körner, awakened by the trumpet of Germany's deliverance, has poured a hero's soul and a patriot's heart into lyric verse, which will endure as long as the memory of the struggle by which it was inspired.

13.
Her prose
writers.

Nor have the efforts of thought in the Fatherland been confined to poetic effusion: in the calmer walks of philosophy and literature, the vigour of the human mind has been equally conspicuous; and a new light has been already thrown, alike on present speculation and past events, by the mingled originality and perseverance of the German character. Niebuhr, uniting to the prodigious industry of the German scholar an instinctive sagacity in discerning truth and apprehending the real springs and state of far-distant events, which is perhaps unrivalled, has thrown a new and important light on the earlier periods of the Roman annals. Though his history, generally obscure, sometimes perplexed, and too often overloaded with insignificant details, can never rival in general popularity the heart-stirring legends to which the page of Livy has given immortality, yet his profound observation and marvellous penetration have rendered

his work the most valuable contribution to the stores of ancient knowledge which modern times have produced. Heeren, not perhaps with equal learning or knowledge, has thrown a clearer if not a more original light over the general history of ancient nations; and demonstrated how much remains still to be done on subjects apparently exhausted by previous industry, when the vigour of real talent and the force of an original mind are applied to their elucidation. The peculiar turn of the German intellect, abstract, contemplative, and often visionary, appears in the writings of Kant; and the reader, in toiling through his obscure pages, cannot but feel both how many new ideas have been poured into the world of thought by the Gothic race, and how much their importance has been diminished by being turned into the realms of ideal contemplation, instead of being devoted to objects of real usefulness.

Perhaps future ages, in comparing the philosophy and literature of England with that of Germany and France, at the commencement of the nineteenth century, will regret that the first has, especially in later times, so exclusively devoted its energies to objects of physical utility, practical importance, or ephemeral amusement, to the neglect of those higher and more lasting purposes which spring from the elevation of national feeling and the purity of national thought: that the direction of the second, cramped by the despotic nature of almost all the governments in the empire, has been so strongly directed to abstract speculation, imaginary feeling, or visionary perfection, to the neglect of those more heart-stirring and momentous topics which bear directly on the wellbeing of society, or the amelioration of the human race: and that the genius of the last, still perverted, save in a few gifted spirits, by the sins and depravity of the Revolution, has been so much lost in the wildness of extravagant fancy, or blinded by the passions of disappointed ambition. And, if we could conceive an era in which the freshness of German thought and the power of German expression, united to the acuteness of French observation and the clearness of French arrangement, were directed by the solidity of English judgment and the sway of English religion, it would probably be the brightest which has ever yet dawned upon the human race.

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14.

What if the
literature of
England,
France, and
Germany had
been com-
bined?

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1809.

15.
Public duties
to which
George III.
was called.

Inferior to many, perhaps all of the illustrious men whose names have been mentioned, in intellectual power or literary acquisition, GEORGE III. will yield to none in the importance of the duties to which he was called, or the enduring benefits which he conferred upon the human race. His it was to moderate the fervour which burst forth in the world; to restrain within due bounds the sacred fire which was to regenerate mankind, and prevent the expansive power, destined to spread through the wilderness of nature the power of European art, and the blessings of Christian civilisation, from being wasted in pernicious attempts, or converted into the frightful sources of explosion and ruin. Vain are all the forces bequeathed to man, if the means of governing them are not at the same time bestowed. The power of steam was known for six thousand years; but it was applied to no useful purpose till the genius of Watt discovered the secret of regulating it: the force of the wind produces only shipwreck and devastation, if the steady hand of the pilot is wanting to direct the impulse which it communicates to the vessel. It was the fate of George III. to be called to the throne of the only free empire in existence during the age of revolutions; to be destined to govern the vast and unwieldy fabric of the British dominions, when torn at one period by internal convulsion, and menaced at another by external subjugation; to be doomed to combat, from the commencement to the end of a reign extending over more than half a century, the revolutionary spirit, veiled at one period under the guise of liberality and philanthropy, flaming at another with the passions and the terrors of a burning world.

16.
Consequences
which have
ensued where
a similar
check did not
exist.

Of the incalculable importance of directing the government of such a country at such a period, with the steady hand of patriotic wisdom, we may form some estimate from observing what had been the consequences of the bursting forth of similar passions at the same time, in other states, where a corresponding regulating power was wanting, and where democracy, through the infatuation of the higher orders, and the delusion of the throne, obtained an early and a lasting triumph. France exhibited the prodigy of a monarch yielding to the wishes, and a nobility impregnated from the very first with the

passions of the people ; and in the horrors of the Revolution, the devastation and subjugation of Europe, and the general ultimate extinction of all moral principle, and every element of freedom within its bounds, is to be found an awful example of the consequences of admitting such a power to act unrestrained on human affairs. Republican feelings, sobered by English habits, and directed by English principle, gained a glorious triumph in America ; and the fabric of Transatlantic independence was laid with a moderation and wisdom unparalleled in the previous annals of the world. But subsequent events have given no countenance to the belief that such institutions can, in a lasting manner, confer the blessings of freedom on mankind ; and have rather suggested the painful doubt, whether the sway of a numerical majority, at once tyrannical at home and weak abroad, may not become productive of intrigues more general, and insecurity as fatal as the worst oppression of despotic states.

Placed midway between these two great examples of democratic triumph, England still exhibits, though with diminished lustre, the rare combination of popular energy with aristocratic foresight. She is neither trampled under the hoofs of a tyrant majority, nor crushed by the weight of military power ; her youth have not been mowed down by the scythe of revolutionary ambition, nor her renown tarnished, save of late years, by the vacillation of multitudinous rule. Gratefully acknowledging the influence, in the continuance of those blessings, which is to be ascribed to the prevalence of religious feeling, the moderation of general opinion, and the habits of a free constitution, it would be unjust not to give its due weight to the personal character of the monarch who swayed the English sceptre when the conflagration burst forth, and the advisers whom it led him to place about the throne. And if any doubt could exist on the subject, we have only to look to 1831, and reflect what would have been the fate of the cause of freedom throughout the world, if, when France was convulsed by the passions of Jacobin ambition, England had been blinded by the delusion of the Reform mania, and surrendered to the guidance of a conceding monarch.

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LXIV.
1810.

17.
Contrast
which the
state of Eng-
land exhibits.

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LXIV.

1810.

18.
Character of
George III.

Although neither the intellectual powers nor mental cultivation of George III. were of a very high order, yet no monarch was ever better adapted for the arduous and momentous duty to which he was called, or possessed qualities more peculiarly fitted for the difficulties with which, during his long reign, he had to contend. Born and bred in England, he gloried, as he himself said, in the name of Briton. Educated in the principles of the Protestant religion, he looked to their maintenance not only as his first duty, but as the only safeguard of his throne. Simple in his habits, moderate in his desires, unostentatious in his tastes, he preferred, amidst the seductions of a palace, the purity and virtues of domestic life. His education had been neglected—his information was not extensive—his views on some subjects were limited; but he possessed in a very high degree that native sagacity and just discrimination, for the want of which no intellectual cultivation can afford any compensation, and which are so often found more than adequate to supply the place of the most brilliant and even solid acquisitions. His private correspondence, now published,* demonstrates that his mind was by nature uncommonly strong and powerful. He inherited from his father the hereditary courage and firmness of his race. On repeated occasions, when his life was attempted, he evinced a rare personal intrepidity; and when he proposed, during the dreadful riots of 1780, to ride at the head of his Guards into the midst of the fires of his capital, he did no more than what his simple heart told him was his duty, but what, nevertheless, bespoke the monarch fitted to quench the conflagration of the world. Though quick in conversation, as kings generally are, he could not be said to have an acute mind; and yet the native strength of his intellect enabled him to detect at once any sophistry which interfered with the just sense he always entertained of his public or religious duties. When Mr Dundas, in the course of conversation on the Catholic claims, previous to Mr Pitt's retirement on that ground in 1800, urged the often repeated argument, that the coronation oath was taken by

* Particularly in Mr Twiss's very interesting *Life of Lord Eldon*. It is not going too far to say that the letters of George III. are the ablest of the many able ones in that work.

him only in relation to his executive duties, he at once replied, "Come, come, Mr Dundas, let us have none of your Scotch metaphysics."

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LXIV.
1809.

But his firmness and principle were of a more exalted cast than what arises from mere physical resolution. No man possessed moral determination in a higher degree, or was more willing, when he felt he was right, to take his full share of the responsibility consequent upon either supporting or resisting any measure of importance. "Though none of my ministers stand by me, yet I will not succumb,"* said he in 1767, in the first serious conflict in which he was engaged after coming to the throne. His moral courage, when his ministers vacillated, singly subdued the fearful riots of 1780.† The firmness which he exhibited on occasion of the run upon the Bank, and the mutiny at the Nore in 1797, brought the nation safely through the most dangerous crisis of recent times. His inflexible determination, in 1807, to admit no compromise with the Catholics regarding the coronation oath averted for twenty years that loosening of the constitution in church and state, under which the nation has since so grievously laboured. When resisting, almost alone, Mr Fox's India bill in 1783, he expressed his determination rather to resign his crown, and retire to Hanover, than permit it to become law. And the result has proved, both that he had correctly scanned on that occasion the feelings of the English people, and rightly appreciated the probable effect of the proposed measure on our Eastern empire, and the balance of the constitution in this country.

19.
His great
moral
courage.

He was obstinate, and sometimes vindictive in his temper, tenacious of power, and contrived, throughout his whole reign, to retain in his own hands a larger share of real authority than usually falls to the lot of sovereigns in constitutional monarchies. But he had nothing permanently cruel or oppressive in his disposition: he freely forgave those who had attempted his life; and stood forth, on every occasion, the warm supporter of all measures having a humane or beneficent tendency. This

20.
His obstinacy
and failings,
and redeem-
ing points
associated
with these.

* George III. to Lord Chatham, 30th May 1767.—CHATHAM Correspondence, iii. 261.

† *Ante*, Chap. ix. § 24, note.

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1810.

inflexible disposition, however, sometimes betrayed him into undue obstinacy; and his well-known determination to admit no accommodation with the American insurgents, prolonged that unhappy contest for years after even his own ministers had become aware that it was hopeless. Yet even such a resolution had something magnanimous in its character. It is now well-known, that, but for the incapacity of the generals in command of the armies, this firmness would have been rewarded with success; and all must admit, that his first words to the American minister who came to his court after the peace,—“I was the last man in my dominions to acknowledge your independence; but I will be the first to support it, now that it has been granted,”—were worthy the sovereign of a great empire, whose moral resolution misfortune could not subdue, and whose sense of honour prosperity could not weaken.

21.
His encouragement of
agriculture,
and love of
the people.

Selecting, out of the innumerable arts which flourished in his dominions, that on which all others were dependent, he concentrated the rays of royal favour on the simple labours of the husbandman. Equalling Henry IV. in the benevolence of his wish,* and outstripping both him and his own age in the justice of his discrimination, he said that he hoped to live to see the day, not when all his subjects could merely read, but when every man in his dominions should have *his Bible* in his pocket.” Like all men in high situations, during a period of popular excitement, of a really upright and conscientious character, he was for a considerable period of his reign the object of general obloquy; and to such a length was this carried, that open attempts to assassinate him were repeatedly made when he appeared in public; but he long survived, as real virtue generally does, this transient injustice. When a jubilee was appointed in 1809, on occasion of the fiftieth year of his reign, the nation unanimously joined in it with thankfulness and devotion; and the more advanced of the present generation still look back to the manly and disinterested loyalty with which, in their youth, the 4th of June† was celebrated by all

* That he might live to see the day when all his subjects had their fowl in the pot.

† The birthday of George III.

classes, with a feeling of interest, which is increased by the mournful reflection that, amidst the selfish ambition and democratic tendency of subsequent times, such feelings, in this country at least, must be numbered among the things that have been.

The reign of the venerable monarch, however, who had awakened these feelings of loyalty among his subjects, was now drawing to a close. The health of the Princess Amelia, his favourite daughter, had long been declining, and she breathed her last, after a protracted illness which she bore with exemplary resignation, on the 2d November 1810. The anguish which the King underwent on this occasion was such, that it produced a return of the grievous mental malady which in 1788 had thrown the nation into such universal grief. Parliament met on the 1st November, in consequence of the monarch's inability to sign any farther prorogation; but, as the alarming indisposition of his majesty had for some time been a matter of notoriety, it was deemed advisable to adjourn from time to time, in the hope, which was for some time held out, of a speedy recovery. These hopes, however, having at length vanished, and the mental aberration of the monarch having assumed a fixed character, it became necessary to apply to parliament on the subject; and on the 20th December, Mr Perceval brought forward the subject in the House of Commons.¹

The basis of his proposition was the resolutions which were the groundwork of Mr Pitt's Regency bill, concerning which there was so vehement a debate in 1788; and they were as follows:—1. That the King being prevented by indisposition from attending to the public business, the personal exercise of the royal authority has been suspended; 2. That it is the right and duty of parliament, as representing all the estates of the people of the realm, to provide the means of supplying the defect in such a manner as the exigency of the case may seem to them to require; 3. That for this purpose the Lords and Commons should determine in what manner the royal assent should be given to bills which had passed both houses of parliament, and how the exercise of the power and authority of the Crown should be put in force during the continuance of the King's indisposition. The great feature of

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XLIV.

1810.

22.

Mental
alienation of
the King in
the close of
1810.

Nov. 2, 1810.

Dec. 20.

¹ Ann. Reg.
1811, p. 11.

23.

Proceedings
in parliament
on that
event.

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LXIV.

1810.

all these resolutions was, that they were a proceeding by *bill*, and not by *address*; and although such a course involved the anomalous absurdity of the royal assent being held to be validly interposed by commission, under the authority of parliament, to a bill for regulating the royal functions, and settling the party by whom they should be exercised, at a time when the royal person was confessedly incapable of adhibiting such consent; yet such an assumption of power by parliament was thought no unwarrantable stretch in such circumstances, when the legislature was *de facto* resolved into two of its elements, and yet the actual existence of the monarch precluded the heir-apparent from ascending the throne in virtue of the law of hereditary succession.¹

¹ Parl. Deb. xviii. 242, 247. Ann. Reg. 1811, p. 1.

24.
Propositions brought forward by ministers.

It was intimated, at the same time, that it was the intention of government to bring forward a bill, vesting all the powers of the Crown in the Prince of Wales, to administer the affairs of the country in the name and on the behalf of his majesty, under no other restriction except such securities for the safety and comfort of the royal person, and the easy resumption of his authority in the event of recovery, as might appear necessary, and a certain restriction for a limited time of the prerogative of creating peers. These propositions were the subject of anxious debate in the two houses of parliament, and the arguments advanced on both sides are worthy of notice even in a European history, as involving the fundamental principles on which constitutional monarchies are rested. The first proposition passed unanimously; the second, declaring the right of parliament to supply the defect, did the like, with the single dissentient voice of Sir Francis Burdett; but upon the third, which declared that parliament should proceed *by bill* to fix the person who was to exercise the royal authority, the Opposition took their stand. An amendment, that *an address* should be presented to the Prince of Wales praying him to take upon himself the royal functions, was proposed by Mr Ponsonby, and on it the main debate took place.²

² Parl. Deb. xviii. 242, 247, 26. Ann. Reg. 1811, p. 1.

On the part of the Opposition, it was argued by Mr Ponsonby, Sir Samuel Romilly, and Earl Grey:—"The case which at present calls for the interposition of parliament, is the absence of the kingly power; and that not

owing to his abdication or to the failure of heirs, but to the incapacity of the existing monarch to execute the duties of the royal office. In dealing with so delicate a matter, one bordering so closely on the very foundations of government, it is of the last importance to adhere to the rules established by former precedent, and, in the absence of positive enactment, proceed in the paths of ancient usage. What, then, in similar circumstances, have our ancestors done? At the Restoration in 1661, the basis of the whole change was the letter and declaration of Charles II. from Breda; and this declaration, with the letter from the king which accompanied it, was delivered on the 25th April; and between that and the 29th of May, when the Restoration took place, an application was made from the Commons to the Lords to put the Great Seal in activity, as without it the proceedings of the courts of law were stopped; but this the House of Peers declined, and the Commons, sensible that their application was absurd and unconstitutional, gave up the proposition. Again, at the Revolution, when James II. had left the country, and the throne was thereby vacant, what did parliament do? Did they proceed by bill to settle the person who was to succeed to the crown, and go through the farce of affixing the Great Seal to an act when there was no sovereign on the throne? No. Even in that extreme case, when the liberties and religion of the whole nation were at stake, and constitutional principles were so well understood from the recent discussion they had undergone, during the great Rebellion and at the Restoration, they never dreamt of such an anomaly, but contented themselves with simply addressing the Prince of Orange to call a parliament, and, when it assembled, they read the great compact between king and people, the bill of rights, and immediately proclaimed William and Mary King and Queen of Great Britain. If proceeding by address was the proper course in the greater cause and on the greater emergency, it must be considered sufficient in the lesser.

“With regard to the proceeding by bill, its absurdity is so manifest, that the only surprising thing is, how it ever could have been thought of. It is matter of universal notoriety, that every bill must have the royal assent

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1810.

25.
Argument for
proceeding
by address on
the part of
the Opposition.
tion.

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20.
Anomalous
nature of the
proceeding
by bill.

before it becomes law ; and, if that is the case in ordinary instances, how much more must it hold in that most momentous of all legislative enactments, the succession of the crown ? Now, by the 33d of Henry VIII., the royal assent must be given by the king personally in parliament, or by commissioners appointed by letters-patent under the royal sign-manual. Is his majesty at present capable of giving his consent in either of these ways ? Confessedly not ; and if so, then the proposed bill, though it may have passed both houses of parliament, must ever want the authority of law. On what pretence, then, can we assume to do by fiction, and by an artificial and operose proceeding, what, in point of fact, is universally known to be impossible ? Other precedents in older times, still more precisely in point, might be quoted ; but these considerations seem so decisive of the matter at issue, as to render their examination unnecessary.

27.
That by
address meets
all the cir-
cumstances of
the case.

“ It may be conceded that the two houses of parliament, and they alone, have the right to supply a deficiency, whether temporary or permanent, in the executive ; but the question is, what is the proper and constitutional form for them to proceed on upon the occasion ? It is just as possible to tell the heir-apparent what restrictions are to be imposed on his authority, in the address which calls upon him to exercise the functions of royalty, as in the bill which confers its powers upon him. If it is deemed advisable to place the custody of the monarch in the hands of the Queen, and to give her majesty the appointment of the great officers of his household, as well as the power of taking the initiative in restoring him to the throne upon his convalescence, is it to be presumed that the Prince Regent, even when he had assumed the powers of royalty, in consequence of the address of the two Houses, would refuse his concurrence to such an arrangement ? It is true, in this way the limitations which parliament may deem necessary upon his power, may not form fundamental parts of the Regent’s authority ; but you have just the same security that he will assent to them as to any other bill which has passed both Houses, as to which there is no instance of a rejection since the Revolution.¹ It is no answer to these objections to say, the same thing was done in 1788,

¹ Parl. Deb.
xviii. 267,
279.

and that precedent should now be followed. The times, the circumstances of the empire, were essentially different in the two cases : then the chief danger apprehended was from the royal prerogative ; now a crippled executive is the greatest calamity which the country, beset with dangers, could encounter ”

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1810.

On the other hand, it was contended by Mr Canning, Mr Perceval, and Lord Castlereagh :—“ Not the right and power of parliament to supply the present defect, but the mode of exercising it, is in question. That great and serious difficulties lie in the way of either of the two methods which might be followed, may at once be admitted : but the question is, not whether either mode of proceeding is unexceptionable, but to which the least important objections can be stated. It is no fault of ours that we are placed in a situation at once painful and perplexing : our duty is to deal with these difficulties in the most legal and constitutional manner which existing circumstances will admit. To object to either of the methods of proceeding (by bill or address) its own inherent difficulties and embarrassments, is only to say, in other words, that we are placed in a situation in the highest degree perplexing. That, however, is not our own act, but that of Providence, and we must deal with it as our ancestors have done. Every catastrophe which suspends or dissolves the hereditary succession to the throne, is necessarily involved in such difficulties : the only point for consideration is, what is the best mode of getting out of them ?

28.
Answer by
the ministers.

“ Now, what precedent does former usage afford to guide us in such perplexities ? The example of the Restoration cannot with any propriety be referred to on this question ; because then an exiled monarch was to be restored to a right of which he had been forcibly and unjustly deprived, and an acknowledged title to be simply proclaimed and re-established. Can this be affirmed to be the predicament in which we stand at this moment ? Unquestionably not ; for we have now no pre-existing right to declare, but a contingency unforeseen by the existing law to provide for. Then, as to the precedent of the Revolution, splendid and cheering as the recollection of that great event must always be to Englishmen, it will be wise in parliament, before they permit their feel-

29.
Examination
of former
precedents.

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1811.

ings to be carried away by it, to consider well whether it has any application to the circumstances in which we are now placed. Was the object of parliament, at that period, to provide for the care and custody of the person of the monarch? Was it to provide for his return to the government of the country upon his restoration to health? Was it to erect a temporary sovereignty during the incapacity of the monarch who, it was hoped, would soon be restored to health? Was it not, on the contrary, to provide *against* the restoration of James: to erect a barrier against his return, and defend the Crown which they proposed to transfer, against the hostile approach of its ancient possessor?

30.
Defence of
the procedure
by bill.

"The argument, founded upon the incompetency of applying the Great Seal to an act of parliament during the incapacity of the sovereign, is founded on no logical principle. Admitting that a fiction of law is adopted—an irregular and absurd proceeding, if you will, carried on when two branches of the legislature authorise the symbol of the consent of the third to be affixed to their bill without the knowledge or consent of that other—does not this arise necessarily from the melancholy event which for a time has resolved government into two of its elements, and compelled them to provide themselves for the public service with only the presumed or feigned consent of the third? It is surely a singular remedy for the unfortunate incapacity of one branch of the constitution, to proceed necessarily to incapacitate the remaining branches. The proceedings at the time of the Revolution were wise, just, and necessary, because there was no other mode of proceeding practicable at that period, when government was dissolved, and no legislative measure, even in the most informal style, could be adopted; but, because such a proceeding was proper then, does it follow that the same precedent should be followed now, when no such necessity exists? And is not the proposal to do so, in the forcible language of Mr Burke, 'to make the extreme medicine of the constitution its daily bread?'

"We have now a parliament full, free, and so constituted as to be perfectly competent to provide for the exigency that exists. What analogy is there between such a situation, and that at the Revolution, when the

very convocation of a parliament was the first step to be taken, and that could only be done by address to the Prince of Orange? Admitting the absurdity of applying the Great Seal, in the king's name, to a bill which has passed both Houses, when there is no sovereign on the throne, the same difficulty exists in as great a degree to the whole proceedings of the regency during the king's life, which, contrary to the fact, speak in the king's name, and profess to utter his will. The question of a regency, it is historically known, was discussed at the Revolution, and rejected as unsuitable to the circumstances which then existed; and this renders that precedent directly hostile to the proceeding by address in the present instance. The older precedents so standing, and such being the equal balance of difficulties or incompetencies on either side, what remains for us but to act upon the latest and most important authority, that of parliament on the king's illness in 1788, which was adopted after the fullest discussion, in circumstances precisely parallel to the present, and with the assistance of all the light to be derived from the greatest constitutional lawyers and statesmen who ever adorned the British senate?"¹

Upon this debate, parliament, by a large majority in both Houses, supported the resolutions proposed by ministers, that is, the proceeding by bill: the numbers being in the Commons 269 to 157; in the Lords 100 to 74.²

The details of the regency bill were afterwards brought forward, and discussed with great spirit and minuteness in committees of both houses of parliament. Most of the clauses were adopted with no other than verbal alterations; but a protracted debate took place on the clause which proposed to lay the Regent for twelve months under certain restrictions, especially in the royal prerogative of creating peers, or calling the eldest sons of peers to the Upper House by writ. These restrictions, however, for that period, were inserted in the bill, by a majority in the Lower House of twenty-four: the numbers being two hundred and twenty-four to two hundred—a majority which fell on the matter of the limitation as to creating peers, to sixteen in the Commons, and in the Lords to six. This rapid diminution of the ministerial majority clearly

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1810.

31.
Inapplicability of the precedent of the Revolution.

¹ Parl. Deb. xviii. 280, 291.

² Parl. Deb. xviii. 329, 460. Ann. Reg. 1811, p. 1.

32.
Diminution of the ministerial majority, but their ultimate success.
Dec. 31, 1810.

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1811.

indicated what an insecure tenure ministers now had of their places, and how strongly the now confirmed malady of the sovereign, and the known partiality of the Prince of Wales for the Whig party, had come to influence that numerous party in parliament—the waverers—in the line of policy they thought it expedient to adopt. The Queen, by the bill, had the appointment of all the offices connected with the King's household, and certain forms were prescribed, according to which she was to take the initiative in paving the way for his restoration to power in the event of his convalescence.* But in the all-important matter of the appointment of a ministry, the Regent was invested, without any restriction, with the whole royal prerogative; and it was universally thought that the first use he would make of his newly-acquired power would be to dismiss the present ministers, and call Lords Grey and Grenville to the head of his councils. Thus modified, the bill appointing the Regent passed the House of Lords on the 29th January, by a majority, however, only of eight; and on the 6th February the royal assent was given by commission, and the Great Seal, the object of so much contention, affixed to the bill; upon which the Prince of Wales immediately entered on the whole functions of royalty, by the title of the Prince Regent.¹

Jan. 29, 1811.
Feb. 6.

¹ Parl. Deb.
xviii. 1084,
1140.

33.
Remarkable
sides taken
on this occa-
sion by the
Whigs and
Tories.

On calmly considering the subject of this vehement contention and narrow division in both houses of parliament, it cannot but strike the most inconsiderate observer, how remarkable it was that the two great parties who divided the state took, upon this constitutional question, sides diametrically opposite to what might have been expected from their previous principles—the Whigs supporting now, as in 1788, the doctrine of the hereditary inherent right of the heir-apparent to the regency, during a contingency not provided for by the Act of Settlement or the constitution, and the Tories exerting all their efforts, equally as in the days of Mr Pitt, to negative the heir-apparent's claim *de jure* to the regency, and to confer it on him by act of parliament only, and under such restrictions as to the two houses of the legislature might seem expedient. A memorable instance of how much, even in the brightest days of national history, the greatest men in public life are influenced by considerations of interest to

themselves or their party, in preference to adherence to the political principles which they profess; and of the ease with which the most conscientious minds are unconsciously swayed by the still small voice of private advantage or public ambition.

But if the merits of the arguments adduced on both sides on this occasion are considered, without reference to the objects of present advantage which either party had at heart, no doubt can be entertained that the Whigs, both in reason and on precedent, had the best of the dispute. Admitting that the constitution, as it at present exists, was originally formed by an exertion of the national will, in opposition to, or in constraint of, the views of the reigning monarch, still no one can doubt that the occasions on which reference is to be made to parliament to appoint the supreme executive magistrate, are extreme ones, and that recourse is not to be had to that *ultimum remedium*, except in cases where no other mode of solving the difficulty and carrying on the government can be discovered. In Mr Burke's words already quoted, to act otherwise would be to make the extreme medicine of the constitution its daily bread. An event so little contrary to the ordinary course of events that it unhappily occurred twice during the life of the same monarch—viz., the insanity or utter incapacity of the reigning sovereign—can hardly be said to be an extreme case, unprovided for by the constitution, calling for a recurrence to first principles, and warranting two branches of the legislature in disposing of the third and the executive magistracy. The right of hereditary succession—the fundamental principle of the monarchy—interfered with to the smallest possible extent at the Revolution, and then fixed *de futuro* on the firmest basis, clearly indicates the mode of solving the difficulty. The heir-apparent, if of competent age to undertake the government—if not, the party entitled by law to the regency during his minority—is the person to whom the interim duty of conducting the executive devolves, leaving it to parliament to make what provision they please for the custody of the person of the fatuous monarch.

The result which followed this interesting discussion in both houses of parliament was such as was little anticipated,

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LXIV.
1811.

34.
Reflections
on the
merits of the
question.

CHAP.
LXIV.

1811.

35.

The Prince
Regent con-
tinues the
ministers in
power.
Feb. 12.

and one which, had it been foreseen, might possibly have inverted the sides which the Ministerial party and Opposition respectively took upon its merits. From the connexion which, during his whole past life, had subsisted between the Prince of Wales and the Whig party, and the close personal intimacy in which he had long lived with its principal leaders, it was universally expected that his first act, upon being elevated to the office of Prince Regent, would have been to have sent for Lords Grey and Grenville, and intrusted them with the formation of a new administration. In fact, the anticipation of this had, towards the close of the year 1810, sensibly diminished the ministerial majority in both houses of parliament; and, by inspiring government with the belief that their tenure of office was drawing to a close, and that an opposite system would immediately be embraced by their successors, had impaired in a most serious manner, and at the most important crisis, their efforts for the prosecution of the war. The despatches of Wellington, during the momentous campaign of 1810 and the commencement of 1811, are filled with observations which, however guarded, show that he felt he was not supported at home as he ought to have been; that government threw upon him the whole responsibility connected with the continuance of the Peninsular struggle, and were either desponding of success after the disastrous termination of the Austrian war, or deemed exertion and expenditure thrown away, from a secret impression that their ministerial career was nearly at an end, and that all continental resistance would be immediately abandoned by their successors. It was, therefore, matter of no small surprise to all parties, and perhaps to none more than to the minister to whom it was addressed, when the Prince Regent, immediately upon being invested with the powers of royalty, wrote a letter to Mr Perceval, announcing that he had no intentions of making any change in the administration; and the speech to parliament which he immediately afterwards delivered differed in no respect, either in regard to sentiments or expression, from what might have been anticipated had George the Third been still discharging the functions of royalty.¹

¹ Ann. Reg.
1811, 8, 9.

Although this communication assigned as the reason,

and the *sole* reason, for the Regent continuing the Tories in office, "the irresistible impulse of filial duty and affection to his beloved and afflicted father, which led him to dread that any act on his part might, in the smallest degree, have the effect of interfering with the progress of his sovereign's recovery;" yet the determination it contained to continue the present government in their places, even for a limited period, gave great umbrage to the leaders of the Whig party. They complained that, as he was unrestricted in the choice of his ministers, no sufficient reason existed for the continuance in office of those to whom he had always been politically opposed; and they entertained an apprehension, which the events proved to be not unreasonable, that the habits of official communication with some of the administration, and the social talents of others, might go far to obliterate that repugnance to the Tory party which the Prince had hitherto evinced. It was generally expected, however, that he would still revert to his earlier friends when the year during which the restrictions were imposed by parliament came to an end; and the opinion was confidently promulgated by those supposed to be most in the Regent's confidence, that February 1812 would see the Whig party entirely and permanently in office.¹

The event, however, again disappointed the hopes entertained by the Opposition. Early in January 1812, the administration sustained a loss by the resignation of Marquis Wellesley, the foreign secretary; and the reasons assigned for this step were, that the ministry, of which Mr Perceval formed the head, could not be prevailed upon to carry on the war in the Peninsula on such a scale, as was either suited to the dignity of the kingdom, or calculated to bring the contest to a successful issue. The Prince Regent, however, earnestly pressed his lordship to retain the seals of office, which he consented to do in the mean time; but when the restrictions expired in February, and still no disposition to make a change of ministry was evinced, the resignation was again tendered, accompanied by a statement that the new administration should be formed on an intermediate principle between instant concession to, and perpetual exclusion of, the Catholics, and with the understanding that the war was

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LXIV.

1812.

36.

Discontent
which this
gives to the
Whig party.¹ Ann. Reg.
1812.

37.

The negotiation
with
Lords Grey
and Grenville
in January
1812, to form
a Whig
ministry,
proves
abortive.
Jan. 16, 1812.

Feb. 12.

CHAP.
LXIV.

1812.

Feb. 28.

Feb. 13.

March 19.

¹ Parl. Deb.
xxii. 38, 89.
Ann. Reg.
1812, 129,
131.

38.
Assassination
of Mr Perceval.
May 11.

to be carried on with adequate vigour. This second resignation was accepted, and Lord Castlereagh was appointed foreign secretary in room of the Marquis; and in the mean time the Prince Regent, through the medium of the Duke of York, opened a communication with Lords Grey and Grenville, the object of which was to induce them, and some of their friends, to form part of the government on the principle of mutual concession and an extended basis. It was soon discovered, however, that the differences between the leaders of the Whigs and Tories were insurmountable, and the result was, that the negotiation came to nothing. Shortly after, a motion by Lord Boringdon in the House of Peers, for an address to the Prince Regent, praying for the formation of a ministry upon an extended basis, was negatived by a majority of seventy-two. From what transpired in this debate, it was evident that a more vital question than even that of the conduct of the foreign war was now the obstacle to the formation of a coalition ministry; and that Catholic emancipation, to the ultimate concession of which it was known Lord Wellesley was favourable, was the real point upon which irreconcilable differences existed, both in the cabinet and between some of its ministers and the throne.¹

A dreadful and unexpected event, however, soon after gave rise to a renewal of the negotiation, and apparently opened the way for the restoration of the Whigs to office, by the destruction of their most formidable and uncompromising opponent. On the 11th May, as Mr Perceval was entering the lobby of the House of Commons, at a quarter past five o'clock, he was shot through the heart, and immediately afterwards expired. A cry arose, "Where is the villain who fired?" and immediately a man of the name of Bellingham stepped forward, and, making no attempt to escape, calmly said, "I am the unfortunate man; my name is Bellingham: it is a private injury; I know what I have done; it was a denial of justice on the part of government." He was immediately seized and carried to the bar of the House of Commons, in which assembly, as well as in the Lords, the greatest agitation prevailed when the calamitous event became known; and both Houses immediately

adjourned. A message of condolence was shortly after voted to the Prince Regent ; and on the 13th, Lord Castlereagh, on the part of the Government, proposed, and Mr Ponsonby, on that of the Opposition, seconded, a vote of £50,000 to the family of the deceased minister, and £2000 a-year annuity to his widow. It appeared, to the honour of this disinterested statesman, who had for years directed the exchequer of the most opulent empire in the world, that not only had he taken advantage of none of the means of enriching himself which were in his power, but he had not even been enabled to make that moderate provision for his family of twelve children which ordinary men, who have been successful in the legal profession, generally do. These provisions, to the honour of the Opposition and of human nature be it said, passed the House without a single dissentient voice, though a debate took place upon the subsequent grant of £3000 a-year to the eldest son of Mr Perceval, after the demise of his mother, which was, however, carried by a large majority ; and a monument in Westminster Abbey to his memory, at the public expense, was also decreed.¹

The trial of the assassin, as the courts were sitting, and no lengthened citation of the prisoner is required by the English law except in cases of high treason, took place on the 15th, four days after the murder. He was found guilty, and executed on the 18th in front of Newgate. His demeanour, both on the scaffold and in prison before his death, was firm, calm, and self-possessed ; he engaged in his religious exercises with fervour, but uniformly persisted in denying his guilt, alleging that the death of Mr Perceval, which he always admitted, was a proper retribution for the minister's neglect of his application for redress of private injuries. An attempt to prove him insane at the trial failed ; and a motion to have the trial postponed, to obtain evidence from a distance of his mental aberration, was refused by the court. Indeed his whole demeanour, though it indicated a degree of excitement on the subject of his real or supposed wrongs which amounted to monomania, was by no means such as to indicate that amount of mental derangement which renders an insane person irresponsible for his actions.²

It afterwards appeared, by the production of a letter

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1812.

May 13.

May 15.

¹ Ann. Reg.

1812, 75, 79.

Parl. Deb.

xxiii. 186,

199.

39.

Trial and
execution of
the assassin.

² State
Trials, xvi.
341, 347.

Ann. Reg.
1812. Chron.
73, 75.

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LXIV.

1812.

40.
Reflections
on this pro-
ceeding.

on the subject from Lord Leveson Gower, the British ambassador at St Petersburg at the time, in the House of Commons, that, though he had sustained great patrimonial losses in England and Russia, yet they had arisen chiefly from his own intemperate conduct and language, and that his supposed claims for indemnification against the British government, and their alleged injustice in disregarding them, were entirely visionary. It is quite clear that he was the fit object of punishment, even though he had a sort of monomania on his real or supposed wrongs; for his aberration consisted in the exaggeration of these wrongs only, not in any insensibility to the guilt of murder, supposing them true. But though, in all probability, the result to the unhappy man would have been the same, and public justice in the end would have required his execution, it must always be regarded with regret, as a stain upon British justice, that the motion made, and earnestly insisted on by his counsel, to have the trial postponed for some days, to obtain evidence from a distance to establish his insanity, was not acceded to; that a judicial proceeding, requiring beyond all others the most calm and deliberate consideration, should have been hurried over with a precipitance which, if not illegal, was at least unusual; and that so glorious an opportunity of exhibiting the triumph of justice over the strongest and most general feelings of resentment, should have been lost from a desire to accelerate, by a few days only, the execution of the criminal.¹*

¹ State Trials, 1812, xvi. 341-7. Ann. Reg. 1812. Chron. 73, 75, 304, 307.

41.
Renewal of the negotia-
tion with the Whigs.

This tragic event reopened to the Whigs the path to power; for not only was the most determined opponent of them, and of the Catholic claims, now removed, but a general wish was felt and openly expressed in the nation for the formation of an administration on an extended basis; which, sinking all minor points of dispute, and embracing the leading men of both parties, should combine the whole talent of the nation in one phalanx, for the prosecution of the great contest in which it was engaged. This idea, so natural and apparently feasible to

* It is a striking proof of the progress which just principles have since made in our jurisprudence, that the course here recommended was precisely what Lord Denman and the Court of King's Bench adopted on the arraignment of M'Naughtan for the murder of Mr Drummond, whom he had mistaken for Sir Robert Peel, in January 1843, under circumstances precisely similar.

men inexperienced in public affairs—so impracticable to all acquainted with their real character, and the vital questions on which irreconcilable differences exist between equally able and conscientious statesmen—had got at this period such hold of the minds of the people, that repeated motions were made in parliament, after Mr Perceval's death, for the formation of a cabinet embracing the leading men of ability in all parties. On the 20th May a motion for an address to the Prince Regent, praying him to construct a cabinet on this principle, brought forward by Mr Stuart Wortley, (now Lord Wharnccliffe,) and supported by the whole strength of the Whigs, was carried against ministers by a majority of *four*—the numbers being one hundred and seventy-four to one hundred and seventy. The subject was afterwards resumed with extraordinary anxiety, on more than one occasion, in both houses of parliament; and in the course of these discussions it transpired, both that the Prince Regent had taken the most decisive steps to carry into effect the wishes of the nation, and that the grand difficulty which obstructed the formation of a united administration was the question of Catholic emancipation. Lord Wellesley first received a commission to form a government; and, when he failed, that arduous duty was intrusted to Lord Moira. Lord Wellesley professed his willingness to take office on the principle of concession to the Irish Romanists, of adequate vigour in the Peninsular war, and of a union of parties in the cabinet; but the first principle the Prince Regent was not inclined to admit, and it was firmly rejected by Lord Liverpool and the Tories in office. After some discussion his royal highness, through Earl Moira, conveyed a wish to Lords Grey and Grenville, that they and their friends should form a leading part of the administration. Conferences took place accordingly: the differences about the Catholics of Ireland and the Spanish war were got over; every thing appeared on the eve of a satisfactory adjustment, and no obstacles remained to prevent the return of the Whigs to power, on all the principles for which they had so long contended, when the negotiation was suddenly broken off, and the Tories were once more firmly seated in office, by one of those unforeseen and trixial obstacles which so often,¹ in

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LXIV.
1812.

May 20.

June 1.
— 5.
— 8.
— 11.

¹ Parl. Deb.
xxiii. 250,
381.

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LXIV.

1812.

42.
Difficulty
respecting the
officers of the
household.

June 6.

the affairs of state, derange the calculations of the wisest statesmen, and yet decide the fate of nations.

In the course of Earl Moira's discussions with Earl Grey and Lord Grenville, which from the first were conducted with the most perfect candour and good faith on both sides, a difficulty occurred as to the appointment of the great officers of the royal household, which had not previously been anticipated, but which proved fatal to the whole negotiation, and to which events in subsequent times have given an unlooked-for degree of interest. It had generally, though not always, been the practice for the chief officers of the household to be changed with an alteration of ministry, upon the principle that a government could not be supposed to possess the royal confidence, and must necessarily be hampered and restricted in its measures, when persons belonging to an opposite and hostile party were in daily, almost hourly, communication, on the most intimate terms, with the sovereign. The Whig peers, in order to prevent such a difficulty arising in a more advanced stage of the administration, stated it as an indispensable condition of their accession to office, that they should enjoy the same privileges in this respect which had been exercised by their predecessors on similar occasions, and this preliminary led to secret conferences more curious even than what passed at the public negotiations. "Are you prepared," said Lord Moira to the Prince Regent, "to concede the appointment of the household to the leaders of the new administration?" "I am," answered the Prince. "Then," replied the chivalrous nobleman, "not one of your present servants shall be displaced: it is enough for the crown to yield the principle, without submitting also to the indignity of the removal." To complete the extraordinary chances which traversed this momentous negotiation, Mr Sheridan, to whom Lord Yarmouth, on the part of the lords of the household, intrusted a message stating their readiness to solve the difficulty by resigning, delayed to deliver this message till it was too late, in the hope of securing for his party a triumph over the throne; and Lord Moira, upon the part of the Prince Regent, declined to make any such concession a fundamental condition of the administration; and thus the negotiation was broken off.¹

¹ Personal information, and Lord Yarmouth's speech. Parl. Deb. xxiii. 423.

The Prince, irritated at what he deemed an unwarrantable interference with the freedom of choice and personal comfort of the sovereign, and acting under the direction of Lord Moira, who thought he had yielded all that could be required of the crown, immediately appointed Lord Liverpool first lord of the treasury. All the existing ministers were continued in their places, including Lord Castlereagh in the important one of minister of foreign affairs; and the Tories, lately so near shipwreck, found themselves, from the strong intermixture of personal feeling in the failure of the negotiations which had excluded their rivals, more firmly seated in power than ever. Lord Yarmouth, the highest officer in the household, whose exclusion from office was probably the principal object which the Whig leaders had in view in insisting so much on this condition, afterwards stated in the House of Lords, that both he himself, and also the other officers in the palace, were prepared to have resigned their offices the moment the arrangements for the formation of a new ministry were completed; and that all they wished for was, that they themselves, and their sovereign, should be saved the pain of a dismissal.¹

In reflecting, with all the lights of subsequent experience, on the singular failure of this important negotiation, it is impossible to doubt that Lords Grey and Grenville were right in the conditions which they so firmly insisted on as a condition of their taking office. It is no doubt easy for the satirist to inveigh against the eagerness for patronage which induces public men, after all questions of policy and principles of government have been adjusted, to break off negotiations, merely because they cannot agree upon who is to have the disposal of domestic appointments; and Mr Sheridan had a fair subject for his ridicule when he said that his friends the Whigs had fairly outdone James II., for he had lost three crowns for a mass, whereas they had lost the government of three kingdoms for three white sticks. But all this notwithstanding, it is sufficiently clear that the Whigs, who could not have foreseen the intended resignation of the Tory officers of the household, were right in stipulating for a power, if necessary, to remove them. Household appointments, of no small moment.

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LXIV.

1812.

43.

Which
excludes the
Whigs from
office.

June 11.

¹ Lord Yarmouth's
speech. Parl.
Deb. xxiii.
423; and
Papers Ibid.
App. i. 43;
and Ann.
Reg. 1812,
84, 90.

44.

Reflections
on this
subject.

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1812.

even to private individuals, are of vital consequence to kings, and still more to queens. The strongest intellect is seldom able to withstand the incessant influence of adverse opinions, delicately and skilfully applied by persons in intimate confidence, and possessing numerous opportunities for successfully impressing them. If no man is a hero, still less is he a sage, to his *valet-de-chambre*. It is in vain to say that the private inclinations of the sovereign are to be consulted in preference to the wishes of his responsible ministers. Household appointments in a palace are, in truth, political situations, and must be in harmony with the principles of government which public opinion or external circumstances have rendered necessary for the country. To decide otherwise is to impose upon ministers the responsibility of office without its power; and hold up one government to the country as regulating its public concerns, while another is in secret directing all its movements.

45.
Vital inter-
ests at stake
to Europe in
this negotia-
tion.

But the failure of this momentous negotiation suggests another, and a still more serious subject of consideration. All the great questions of policy, both in external and internal concerns, had been arranged between the sovereign and the new ministry. The difficulties of Catholic emancipation, the Peninsular contest, and American concession, had been satisfactorily adjusted, and a vital change in the government and policy of the country was on the point of taking place, when it was prevented, and Mr Pitt's system continued as the ruling principle, by a mere contest about the appointment of three household officers! Yet what mighty interests, not only to Great Britain but the human race, were then at stake; and what wondrous changes in the course of events must have ensued, if this seemingly Providential difference about the household officers had not arisen! The contest with France, after a duration of nearly twenty years, had at length reached its crisis. The rock of Sisyphus, rolled with such difficulty to the summit of the steep, was about to recoil. The negotiation with the Whigs was broken off on the 6th June. On the 13th of the same month Wellington crossed the Portuguese frontier, and commenced the campaign of Salamanca;¹ while on the 23d Napoleon passed the Niemen, and perilled his crown and his life on the

¹ Gurw. ix.
238.

precarious issue of a Russian invasion.¹ The expulsion of the French from the Peninsula, the catastrophe of Moscow, the resurrection of Europe, were on the eve of commencing, when the continued fidelity of England to the cause of freedom hung on the doubtful balance of household appointments!

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1812.

¹ Fain. 163.

If a change of ministry had taken place at that time, the destinies of the world would probably have been changed. The Whigs, fettered by their continued protestations against the war, could not, with any regard to consistency, have prosecuted it with vigour. Their unvarying prophecies of disaster from the Peninsular contest would have paralysed all the national efforts in support of Wellington; their continued declamations on the necessity of peace would have led them to embrace the first opportunity of coming to an accommodation with Napoleon. Alexander, mindful of their refusal of succour after the battle of Eylau, would have been shaken in his resolution after the battle of Borodino. Sweden, unsupported by English subsidies, would not have ventured to swerve from the French alliance. The occupation of Moscow would have led to a submission destructive of the liberties of Europe; or the retreat, unthreatened, from the north, would have been spared half its horrors; at latest, peace would have been concluded with the French Emperor at Prague. Wellington would have been withdrawn with barren laurels from the Peninsula; Europe had been yet groaning under the yoke of military power, and the dynasty of Napoleon still upon the throne. In contemplating the intimate connexion of such marvellous results with the apparently trivial question of household appointments in the royal palace of Great Britain, the reflecting observer, according to the temper of his mind, will indulge in the vein of pleasantry or the sentiment of thankfulness. The disciples of Voltaire, recollecting how a similar court intrigue arrested the course of Marlborough's victories in one age, and prolonged the popular rule in Great Britain in another, will inveigh against the subjection of human affairs to the direction of chance, the caprice of sovereigns, or the arts of courtiers; while the Christian philosopher, impressed with the direction of all earthly things by an

46.

Results which would have followed if the Whigs had then obtained office.

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47.
Character of
George the
Fourth.

Almighty hand, will discern in these apparently trivial events the unobserved springs of Supreme Intelligence; and conclude, that as much as royal partialities may be the unconscious instruments of reward to an upright and strenuous, they may be the ministers of retribution to a selfish and corrupted age.

George IV., who, probably from personal rather than public considerations, was led to take this important step in the outset of his government, had the good fortune to wield the sceptre of Great Britain during the most glorious era in its long and memorable annals; and yet no sovereign ever owed so little to his own individual wisdom or exertions. The triumphs which have rendered his age immortal were prepared by other hands, and matured in a severer discipline. It was his good fortune to succeed to the throne at a time when the seeds sown by the wisdom of preceding statesmen, the valour of former warriors, and the steadiness of the last monarch, were beginning to come to maturity; and thus he reaped the harvest prepared, in great part, by the labours of others. Yet justice must assign him a considerable place in the august temple of glory completed during his reign. If the foundation had been laid, and the structure was far advanced, when he was called to its direction, he had the merit of putting the last hand to the immortal fabric. To the vast and unprecedented exertions made by Great Britain towards the close of the contest, he gave his cordial concurrence; he resisted the seducing offers of peace when they could have led only to an armed neutrality; and, by his steady adherence to the principles of the Grand Alliance, he contributed in no slight degree to keep together its discordant elements, when they were ready to fall to pieces amidst the occasional disasters and frequent jealousies of the last years of the war. The unprecedented triumphs with which it concluded, and the profound peace which has since followed, left little room for external exploits during the remainder of his reign; and the monarch was of too indolent a disposition, though not of too limited a range of intellectual vision, to influence those momentous internal changes which ensued, or take any part either in advancing or retarding the vast revolution of general thought

which succeeded to the excitement and animation of the war. Yet history must at least award to him the negative merit of having done nothing to accelerate the changes which grew up with such extraordinary rapidity during that period, so fertile in intellectual innovation; of having been the last man in his dominions who yielded to that momentous alteration in their religious institutions which first loosened the solid fabric of the British empire; and of having left to his successors the constitution, at a period when it was seriously menaced by domestic distress and general excitement, unimpaired either by tyrannic encroachment or democratic innovation.

If, from the comparatively blameless and glorious picture of George IV.'s public administration, we turn to the details of his private life, and the features of his individual character, we shall find less to approve and more to condemn. Yet even there some alleviating circumstances may be found; and the British nation, in the calamities which hereafter may ensue from the failure of the direct line of succession, can discern only the natural result of the restrictions, equally impolitic and unjust, which it has imposed, in their dearest concerns, on the feelings of its sovereigns. His talents were of no ordinary kind, and superior to those of any of the family. It is impossible to see the busts of the sons of George III. in Chantrey's gallery, without being at once convinced that the Prince of Wales had the most intellectual head of the group.* None could excel, few equal, his talents in conversation, or the ability with which he sustained it with the ablest and most intellectual men of the day. His tastes were cultivated; he had a high admiration for the great works of painting; his ear in music was exquisite; and although his passion in architecture was rather for the splendour of internal decoration than the majesty of external effect, yet the stately

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1812.

48.
His private
disposition
and cha-
racter.

* This is decisively established by the testimony of no ordinary observer, and certainly no partial judge. "It may give you pleasure," said Lord Byron to Sir Walter Scott, "to hear that the Prince Regent's eulogium on you to me was conveyed in language which would only suffer by my attempting to transcribe it; and with a tone and taste which gave me a very high idea of his abilities and accomplishments, which I had hitherto considered as confined to manners, certainly superior to those of any living gentleman."—*LORD BYRON TO SIR WALTER SCOTT, July 6, 1812; LOCKHART'S Life of Scott, il. 402.*

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halls of Windsor will long remain an enduring monument of his patronage of art in its highest branches. The jealousy which generally exists between the ruling sovereign and the heir-apparent early brought him into close connexion with the leaders of the Whig party ; and for nearly fifteen years Carlton House was the grand rendezvous of all the statesmen, wits, and beauties, whom jealousy of the reigning power had thrown into the arms of the Opposition.

49.
His great
elegance of
manners, and
felicity of
expression.

This circumstance had a material influence on his future character. Accustomed from his earliest youth to the society, not merely of the most elegant but the most intellectual men of his age ; the companion, not less than the friend, of Burke and Fox, of Grey and Sheridan, he soon acquired that skill and delicacy in conversation which such intercourse alone can communicate, and shone with the reflected light which so often, when presented by those habituated to such society, dazzles the inexperienced beholder, and supplies, at least during the hours of social intercourse, the want of original thought or solid acquirements. Yet his talents were not entirely acquired from the brilliant circle by which he was surrounded. His perceptions were quick ; his abilities, when fairly roused either by the animation of conversation or the lustre of external events, of a very high order ; and many of his holograph letters are a model of occasional felicity both in thought and expression.* His features were handsome ; his figure, in youth, graceful and commanding ; and both then and when it was injured in maturer years by the hereditary corpulence of his family, his manners were so perfectly finished, that he was universally admitted to deserve the title which he acquired—that of the first gentleman in Europe.

But with these, no inconsiderable qualities it is true in a sovereign, the meed of praise due to his memory is

* The following holograph note from the Prince Regent to the Duke of Wellington, accompanied the appointment of the latter as Field-Marshal after the battle of Vittoria :—" Your glorious conduct is above all human praise, and far above any reward. I know no language the world affords worthy to express it. I feel I have nothing left to say, but devoutly to offer up my prayer of gratitude to Providence that it has, in its omnipotent bounty, blessed my country and myself with such a general. You have sent me, among the trophies of your unrivalled fame, the staff of a French marshal, and I send you in return that of England."—*THE PRINCE REGENT to WELLINGTON, 3d July 1813.*—GURWOOD, x. 532.

exhausted, and there remains nothing but to do justice to the faults, and draw no screen over the many frailties of his character. Thrown from the outset of life into the vortex of dissipation, without the necessity for exertion, which, in an humbler rank, or on a despotic throne, so often counteracts its pernicious effects, he soon became an ardent votary of pleasure ; and without descending to the degrading habits to which that propensity often leads, he only rendered its sway on this account the more tyrannical and destructive to his character. Profuse, extravagant, and unreflecting, he not only was throughout his whole life, before he mounted the throne, drowned in debt, but the systematic pursuit of refined enjoyment involved him in many discreditable and unfeeling, and some dishonourable acts. Dissipation and profligacy in youth, indeed, are so usual in princes, and arise so readily from the society with which they are surrounded, that they are to such persons peculiarly difficult of resistance ; but the passions of George IV., fretting against the unjust restrictions of the Marriage Act, led him into delinquencies of a more serious kind. His conduct towards Queen Caroline, whatever the demerits of that princess may have been, was unpardonable ; for it began to be unjust before those demerits could have been known, and continued to be unfeeling after misfortune had expiated them by suffering. And if it be true, as is generally believed, that he gained possession of the person of a beautiful and superior woman, Mrs Fitzherbert, by a fictitious or elusory marriage ceremony, and subsequently, after having made his friends in parliament deny its existence, deserted her, he was guilty of an action which passion cannot extenuate and royalty should not excuse. He had not the sturdy honesty of his father ; his dissimulation was profound, and his friends were often the victims of his deceit. The last days of this fortunate monarch and systematic voluptuary were chiefly spent at Windsor, in the seclusion of elegant society, intermingled with the brilliancy of conversational talent. And if its noble halls were the scene of meretricious ascendancy, at least they were not disgraced by open profligacy ; decency and seclusion threw a veil over irregular connexions ; and justice must admit that subjection to female charms was

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1812.

50.

His frailties
and faults.

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LXIV.

1811.

in his case more than usually pardonable, from the unjust laws which had deprived him of a free choice in virtuous attachments, and the calamitous union which had denied him the blessings of domestic and filial love.

51.
Character of
Lord Liver-
pool.

It is a singular circumstance, that the statesman who, with his sovereign, was thus elevated to the helm at a crisis of unexampled difficulty, and when the national prospects were to all appearance gloomy in the extreme, was almost from the moment of his elevation borne forward on an uninterrupted flood of success; and that, though inferior in capacity to many of the great characters who had preceded him in the struggle, he exceeded them all in the felicity of his career, and the glorious events which, under his administration, were so deeply engraven on the monuments of history. Much of this extraordinary prosperity is doubtless to be ascribed to his singular good fortune. He had the almost unprecedented felicity of being called to the highest place in government at the very time when the tide, which ever exists in the affairs of men, was beginning to turn; when the stream-flow of Napoleon's triumphs was changing to ebb; and when the constancy of Britain, long conspicuous in adverse, was to be rewarded by a bright train of prosperous fortune. Like his royal master George IV., he thus reaped, with little exertion of his own, the fruits of the seed sown by the efforts of others; and was called, during his lengthened ministry, rather to moderate the vices consequent on excessive prosperity, than to sustain the national spirit under the trials of protracted and searching adversity.

52.
His merits
and public
services.

Justice, however, must assign to Lord Liverpool, if not the highest, at least a considerable place, among the great men who threw such imperishable glory over the annals of Britain during the latter period of the war. His capacity could not have been the least, who stood foremost in rank through those memorable years. Granting to Alexander, Wellington, and Castlereagh, the merit of having been the main instruments in the deliverance of Europe, the British premier may at least justly lay claim to the subordinate but important merit of having strenuously supported their efforts, and furnished them with the means of achieving such important triumphs. His

judgment in council, temper in debate, and conciliation in diplomacy, admirably seconded their heroic efforts. The resources brought by England to bear upon the fortunes of Europe at the close of the struggle, were unexampled since the beginning of the world ; and if the spirit of the nation put them at his disposal, no small wisdom and skill were displayed in the use which he made of them. Notwithstanding all their successes, the allied sovereigns were sometimes, from the jealousies and separate interests inherent in so vast a coalition, exposed to serious divisions ; and on these occasions the judgment and prudence of Lord Liverpool were of the highest service to the common cause. He could not be called a powerful debater, and his speeches made little impression at the time on either house of parliament ; but they abounded in valuable matter and sound argument, and few afford, on a retrospect, a more luminous view of the principles which swayed the government at many of the most important periods of the war. His private life was irreproachable, his domestic habits pure and amiable ; and, like all the great statesmen of that heroic period, he long held the highest offices, and disposed of uncounted wealth, without a spot upon his integrity, or having conferred a more than moderate share of patronage on his connexions.

He held a respectable place, however, in the second class of statesmen only, and did not belong to that of the master-spirits of mankind. He had not sufficient vigour of character, or reliance on his own judgment, to take a decided line in any arduous crisis. His maxim always was to temporise and avoid difficulties, rather than brave the danger in the outset. Under a calm and dignified deportment, and the most unruffled suavity in debate, he concealed an anxiety of temper and dread of responsibility, which often appeared painfully conspicuous at the council board, and rendered him unfit to hold the helm in any period of real danger. He had neither the ardour of genius, nor the strength of intellect, nor the heroism of valour in his character. Clear-sighted as to immediate, his vision was defective as to remoter dangers. Judicious and prudent in counsel in ordinary times, he was a dangerous adviser in cases of difficulty, and exercised a ruinous

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53.
His weaknesses and errors.

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influence on the ultimate fortunes of his country. He was mainly instrumental in introducing, after the close of the war, that seductive policy which purchases present favour by sacrificing future resources, and wins the applause of the existing multitude by risking the censure of the thinking in every future age. The popularity, accordingly, of his government, during the fifteen years that he remained prime-minister, was unprecedented; opposition seemed to have disappeared in parliament, as it was thought to have expired in the country. But amidst all these seductive appearances, the elements of future discord were preparing. The sinking fund was fatally encroached upon, with the general concurrence of the unthinking multitude; indirect taxes, the pillar of public credit, were repealed to an unnecessary and ruinous extent; a vast and uncalled-for monetary change spread unprecedented discontent through the industrious classes; the people were habituated to the pernicious flattery that their voice is wisdom, and must be obeyed; and out of the calm which was thought to be perpetual arose the tornado which overturned the constitution.

54.
Restoration
of the Duke
of York to
the command
of the army.
May 25.

The year 1811 beheld the extinction of the absurd and exaggerated discontent against the Duke of York which, for factious purposes, had been raised two years before. Colonel Wardle, the principal agent in producing the clamour, had long since returned to obscurity; the want of the Duke's intimate acquaintance with the business of the Horse-Guards, and active zeal for the interests of the army, had long been severely felt; and on the 25th May 1811, after somewhat more than two years spent in a private station, he was again, with the general concurrence of the nation and the universal approbation of the army, reinstated in his office of commander-in-chief, which he held during the whole remainder of the war. The subject was brought forward by Lord Milton in parliament shortly after it occurred; but the result only tended to demonstrate, in the most decisive manner, the total revolution which public opinion had undergone regarding it. The debate was feebly conducted on the part of the Opposition; when Lord Milton put the case hypothetically, that "the Duke might have been the

victim of a foul conspiracy," a universal cheer burst from all parts of the House, and the motion to have the appointment censured was negatived by a majority of two hundred and forty-nine—the numbers being two hundred and ninety-six to forty-seven.¹ If any doubt could still exist on the justice as well as expedience of this step, it would be removed by the contemporary testimony of Wellington. "I rejoice most sincerely," said he, "at the reappointment of the Duke of York as commander-in-chief. The arrangement is not less a matter of justice to him than of benefit to the public interests; and it has been so admirably timed that the motion of Lord Milton is likely to be advantageous to the Duke's character."²

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¹ Ann. Reg.
1811, 72, 74.
Parl. Deb. ix.
470, 510.

² Wellington
to Torrens,
June 29,
1811. Gurw.
viii. 61.

Two circumstances, during the years 1810 and 1811, convulsed the internal frame of society to an extraordinary degree, and are deserving of notice even in a general history. These were the parliamentary proceedings against Sir Francis Burdett for contempt of the House of Commons, and the general distress which led to the Luddite disturbances. SIR FRANCIS BURDETT is a statesman who, for nearly half a century, took so prominent a part in English parliamentary history, that he deserves a place in the portrait-gallery of the age. Endowed by nature with no ordinary talents, an accomplished scholar, an eloquent speaker, an indefatigable senator, the master of a splendid fortune, and connected both by position in society and family alliances with the higher branches of the nobility, he was yet for the greater part of his political career the ardent friend of the people; the adored, often rash and dangerous, champion of popular rights; a zealous advocate of parliamentary reform in its widest sense, an extended suffrage, Catholic emancipation, and all the objects which the extreme section of the Whig party had at heart. But he was at the same time at bottom a sincere friend to the monarchy, and pursued these objects from a belief, sincere and honest, though now proved to be mistaken, that such changes, even if pushed to their utmost limits, were not inconsistent with the security of property, the stability of the altar, and the existence of the throne. A sense of this error caused him in the close of life, after the effect of the

55.
Character of
Sir Francis
Burdett.

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Reform Bill had become apparent, to join the conservative ranks; but at the period with which we are now engaged he was the most furious opponent of the oligarchy who, he conceived, directed the national councils; and "England's pride and Westminster's glory," as he was termed by his potwalloping constituents in that borough, was ever in the foremost ranks of those who declaimed with most asperity against ministerial influence or parliamentary corruption.

56.
His libel on
the House of
Commons.

He had long inveighed in no measured strains against the Tory majority by which the proceedings of the House of Commons were controlled; but as most of these declamations were pronounced within the walls of parliament, they were beyond the reach of animadversion. At length, however, he laid himself open to attack in a more vulnerable quarter. A violent democrat, named John Gale Jones, had published a resolution of a debating club of which he was president, which the House of Commons deemed a libel on their proceedings, and that assembly had in consequence sent him to Newgate for breach of privilege. Sir Francis more than once brought this matter under the consideration of the House, and strongly contended, though in vain, that parliament had no legal power of their own authority to punish a person for an offence cognisable in the ordinary courts of justice, even though it did contain a libel on their proceedings, and that the warrant of commitment was illegal and a breach of the liberties of the subject. The House overruled these arguments by a majority of 153 to 14. Upon this Sir Francis published a letter to his constituents in Cobbett's *Weekly Register*, which, among other passages of strong invective, declared that the real question was, "Whether our liberty be still to be secured to us by the laws of our forefathers, or to lie at the absolute mercy of a part of our fellow-subjects, collected together by means which it is not necessary for me to describe. They have become, by burgage tenure, the proprietors of the whole legislature; and in that capacity, inflated with their high-flown and fanciful ideas of majesty, they assume the sword of prerogative, and lord it equally over the king and people!"¹

¹ Ann. Reg.
1810, 92, 99.

The House of Commons, upon this letter being brought

before them, passed a resolution, by a majority of 190 to 152, that Sir Francis be committed to the Tower. Great doubts were entertained in the first instance by the Speaker, whether his warrant, which was immediately issued, would authorise the breaking open of Sir Francis's house, which was barricaded, and where he remained without moving out. The Attorney-general, (Sir V. Gibbs,) however, gave it as his opinion that entry might be made good by force, if it could not otherwise be obtained; and the sergeant-at-arms accordingly, on the day following, forced his way in by the aid of a police force, supported on the outside by the military. Sir Francis was found in his library, surrounded by his family, and employed, with a somewhat strained effort for theatrical effect, in making his son translate *Magna Charta*. Having made such a show of resistance as to demonstrate that he yielded to compulsion, he was conveyed under a military escort to the Tower, where he remained a prisoner till the close of the session of parliament. Serious riots occurred, and some lives were lost on the evening of the day on which the imprisonment took place, chiefly in consequence of an erroneous report which was spread that the Tower guns had fired upon the people. Sir Francis afterwards wrote an intemperate letter to the Speaker on the alleged illegality of the proceeding, which, however, the House had the good sense, having exhausted their powers of chastisement, to pass over without farther notice. Meanwhile, the imprisoned baronet received a great variety of addresses from various popular assemblies in the kingdom, and the House of Commons was deluged with petitions for his liberation. But they continued firm; and Sir Francis remained in confinement till the prorogation of parliament, when the power of the assembly which committed him having ceased, he was of course liberated. Great preparations for his triumphal procession through the city to his residence in Piccadilly, were made by the populace, and serious apprehensions of disturbances were entertained; but he had the good sense or humanity not to bring his partisans into the risk which such a demonstration would have occasioned, by returning privately to his house by water. He afterwards brought actions at

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57.

His commitment to the Tower, and consequent riots.
March 26.

April 9.

May 21.

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¹ Parl. Deb.
xvi. 454, 630.
Ann. Reg.
1810, 106, 110;
and App. to
Chron. 265,
267.

58.
Reflections
on this
subject.

² Table-Talk,
i. 8, 9.

law against the Speaker of the House of Commons, for damages on account of illegal seizure, housebreaking, and imprisonment; and against Lord Moira, the Governor of the Tower, for unwarrantable detention; and the case was argued with the greatest ability by the Attorney-general on the one side, and Sergeant (afterwards Mr Justice) Holroyd on the other. The Court of King's Bench, however, sustained the defence for both, that they acted under the orders of a competent authority, and that the privileges of parliament had not been exceeded, and could not be questioned in a court of law.¹

Upon this case it has been observed by Mr Coleridge:—"The House of Commons must of course have the power of taking cognisance of offences against its own rights. Sir Francis Burdett might have been properly sent to the Tower for the speech which he made to the House; but when afterwards he published them in Cobbett, and they took cognisance of it as a breach of privilege, they violated the plain distinction between privilege and law. As a speech in the House, the House could alone animadvert upon it, consistently with the effective preservation of its most necessary prerogative of freedom of debate; but when that speech became a book, then the law was to look upon it; and there being a law of libel commensurate with every possible object of attack in the state, privilege, which acts or ought to act only as a substitute for other laws, could have nothing to do with it."² In these observations of the philosophic sage, there is much subject for anxious reflection in the breast of every friend to real freedom. It is the essential characteristic of such a blessing, that it renders law omnipotent and personal privilege quiescent. The monarch may punish an insult offered to his authority, but he must do so by prosecutions in his own courts of law, and by proving the accused party guilty before a jury of his subjects. There is not only the same, but a much stronger reason, why a numerous assembly of the legislature should be constrained to enforce the respect due to their authority or deliberations, when insulted out of their own presence, and not at the moment interfering with their discussions, in the same way: for in their case numbers destroy responsibility without conferring wisdom, while ambition

weakens the sense of justice without adding to the capacity for judgment. In this respect there is no difference whether the assembly is of a popular or aristocratic class; whether it is subject to the caprices of a tyrant majority, or, swayed by the influence of a corrupt court. Human nature is always the same, and the danger of tyranny is not the less formidable that its powers are wielded by a multitude of tyrants. Under pretence of maintaining the inviolability of their own privileges, a despotic assembly may entirely extinguish those of their subjects. While professing for themselves the most unbounded freedom of discussion, they may crush all fearless examination of their conduct by others. Diminution of respect, degradation of authority, need never be apprehended from the legislature claiming no superiority in this respect over the sovereign or the judges of the land. The makers of laws never stand on so lofty a pedestal as when they acknowledge the paramount authority, in the application of these laws, of the courts by which they are administered; they never descend so low as when they set the first example of violating that general equality which they have proclaimed for their subjects.*

The popular discontents, excited by this ill-timed and doubtfully founded assertion of the powers of sovereignty by the House of Commons, were augmented to an alarming degree by the general distress which prevailed in the manufacturing districts of Great Britain during the latter part of the year 1810 and the whole of 1811. Various causes contributed to produce this distressing result; but among them the least influence is to be imputed to the Continental System of Napoleon, to which his panegyrists are willing to ascribe the whole. The real causes were very different; and either arose necessarily from the progress of society, or might have been easily avoided by a more prudent policy on the part of the British merchants and government. Machinery at that period had taken one of its great starts in the application of its powers to manufacturing industry. The mule and the spinning-jenny; the vast improvements of Arkwright and Cart-

59.
General distress in the manufacturing districts in 1811, and its causes.

* The author cannot dismiss this subject without offering his tribute of praise to the dignified firmness of Mr Sheriff Evans and Mr Sheriff Wheulton, who in 1840 have so nobly vindicated these privileges, and have obtained in consequence a distinguished place in the glorious pantheon of British patriots.

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wright, had been added to the immortal discovery of Watt; and the operative classes, in great part deprived of their employment by the change, brooded in sullen exasperation over innovations which they regarded, not without some show of reason, as destructive of the subsistence of themselves and their families. The vast export trade, which had risen to the unprecedented amount of nearly £47,000,000 sterling in the year 1809, in consequence of the withdrawal of the French coast-guard from northern Germany, to restore the fortunes of the empire on the Danube, had engendered a spirit of speculation which regarded the exports to continental Europe as unbounded, and terminated in a cruel reverse, from the confiscation of a fleet of above three hundred merchantmen, having on board goods to an immense amount, in the Baltic, in November 1810, by order of the Emperor of Russia.¹

¹ Parl. Deb.
xxi. 1094,
1163.

60.
Ruinous ef-
fects of the
Orders in
Council.

But, above all, the cause of this distress was to be found in the loss of the North American market. The natural irritation of the American government at the unbounded vexations to which they had been exposed by both the belligerent powers from the operation of the Berlin and Milan Decrees, and the Orders in Council, had produced, on the part of the government of the United States, the Non-intercourse Act in February 1811, whereby all commercial connexion both with France and England was terminated, and the vast market of the United States, worth all other foreign markets put together, which took off British manufactures to the amount of above thirteen millions sterling, was entirely lost. To complete the causes of general distress which then pressed upon the nation, the harvests of 1810 and 1811 were so deficient, that in the last of these years the importation amounted to 1,471,000 quarters, to purchase which the enormous sum of £4,271,000, chiefly in specie, was sent out of the country.² These causes, joined to the excessive drain of the precious metals arising from the vast expenditure and boundless necessities of the war, both in Germany and the Peninsula, in the year 1809, produced a very great degree of commercial distress through the whole of 1811;³ and the reality of the defalcation, and the alarming decline in the market for our manufacturing industry, appeared in the most decisive manner from the returns

² Parl. Deb.
xxi. 178.

³ Porter's
Rise &c. of
Britain, ii.
98. Parl.
Deb. xxi.
1094, 1163.

of exports, which sank in that year to twenty-eight millions, being fifteen millions less than in the preceding year, and much lower than they had been since the renewal of the war.*

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So general and pressing was the public distress, and so overwhelming, in particular, the embarrassments in which the commercial classes were involved, that parliament, in spring 1811, with great propriety, following the example of 1793, came forward for their relief. In March of that year, the chancellor of the exchequer brought forward a bill for the purpose of authorising government to issue exchequer bills to the mercantile classes to the extent of six millions sterling, the advances to be repaid by instalments at nine and twelve months after receipt. This resolution was agreed to without a division; and, although not more than half of this large sum was actually required or taken up by the community, yet the fact of government coming forward in this way had a most important effect in upholding commercial credit, and preventing the occurrence of one of those panics, so common in subsequent times, which might have proved extremely dangerous at that political crisis to the empire. Little of the money thus advanced was ultimately lost to the community; but it must always be considered as an act highly honourable to the British government, that at a period when they were oppressed by a sinking exchequer and an increasing war expenditure, they came forward with this splendid advance to sustain the mercantile credit, and assuage the manufacturing distress of the community.¹

61.
Commercial relief afforded by parliament.
Feb. 14.

¹ Parl. Deb.
xix. 327, 350.

It may readily be conceived what wide-spread internal distress and discontent so prodigious a diminution in the colonial and manufacturing exports of the kingdom must have occasioned, especially when coming in the nineteenth year of the war, and to a nation already overburdened with excessive and universal taxation. The

62.
Origin and progress of the Luddite disturbances.

* Exports (official value) from 1808 to 1812:—

	Foreign and Colonial.	British and Irish.	Total.
1808,	£5,776,775	£24,611,215	£30,387,990
1809,	12,750,358	33,542,274	46,292,632
1810,	9,357,435	34,061,901	43,419,336
1811,	6,117,720	22,681,400	28,799,120
1812,	9,533,065	29,508,508	39,041,573

—PORTER'S *Rise and Progress of the Nation*, ii. 98.

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unhappy operatives who were thrown out of employment, suffering severe distress, and incapable of extending their vision to the wide and far-distant causes which had concurred to produce these calamitous results, conceived that their distresses were entirely owing to the introduction of machinery into the manufactories, and would be relieved by its destruction. A wide-spread conspiracy was, in consequence, formed for the destruction of the obnoxious frames, which, originating in the weaving districts of Nottinghamshire, soon spread to the adjoining counties of Derby and Leicester, and involved a large part of the manufacturing zone of England in riot and alarm. Undisguised violence, and open assemblages of the disaffected, took place; but these excesses were speedily suppressed by the interposition of the military. Upon this the conspirators, who acted in concert, and took the name of Luddites, from that of General Ludd, their imaginary leader, adopted the more dangerous system of assembling secretly at night, quickly completing the work of destruction, and immediately dispersing before either their persons could be identified, or assistance from the nearest military station procured.¹

¹ Ann. Reg.
1812, 35, 38.
Parl. Deb.
xxi. 807, 820.

63.
They come to
a height, and
are suppressed.

At length in the winter of 1811 and the spring of 1812, the evil rose to such a height, especially in the great and populous county of York, that it attracted the serious attention of both houses of parliament. Secret committees were appointed in consequence, who collected a large mass of evidence, and made reports of great value on the subject. From the information obtained, it appeared that, though this illegal confederacy had its ramifications through all the central counties of England where manufactories were established, and was organised in the most efficient manner to effect the objects of the conspirators, yet it was almost entirely confined to persons in the very lowest ranks of life, and was rather directed to the immediate objects of riot and plunder than to any general or systematic change in the frame of government. A bill, limited however in its duration to the 1st of January 1814, was passed into a law, rendering the breaking of frames a capital offence; and with such energy was this enactment carried into operation, that no less than seventeen men were condemned to death, and executed in the

Feb. 26.

April 17,
1812.

court-yard of the castle of York, at one time, for crimes connected with these disturbances. This dreadful but necessary example had the effect of stopping these dangerous riots, which, like other undisguised inroads on life and property, however formidable in the vicinity where they occur, are never dangerous in a national point of view, if not aided by the pusillanimity or infatuation of the middle and higher ranks. And before the end of the year, all disposition even to these excesses died away under the cheering influence of the extended market for manufacturing industry, which arose from the opening of the Baltic harbours, and the animating events of the Russian campaign.¹

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¹ Ann. Reg.
1812, 35, 38.
132. Chron.
17, 30. Parl.
Deb. xxi.
807, 840.

Among the senators in the Opposition ranks who distinguished themselves by their resistance to this increase, even for a limited period, of the number of capital offences in English law, and who devoted the energies of a powerful mind and the warmth of a benevolent heart, to the end of his life, to effect the amelioration of its sanguinary enactments, was SIR SAMUEL ROMILLY. This great lawyer, and truly estimable statesman, was of French descent; but his parents had settled in London, where his father carried on business as a jeweller; and he had the merit of raising himself, by his unaided exertions, from the respectable but comparatively humble sphere in which they moved, to the most exalted station in society. He was called to the bar in 1783; and it was impossible that his perseverance and logical precision of argument could have failed of raising him to eminence in that profession, where talent adapted to it seldom fails in the end to overbear all competition. He was highly distinguished, and in great practice in Chancery, before he was heard of beyond the legal circles of the metropolis. His reputation, however, at length procured for him more exalted destinies. In 1806 he was made solicitor-general by Mr Fox, and elevated to the rank of knighthood; and at the same time he took his seat in parliament as one of the members for Queensborough—thus adding another to the long array of illustrious men, on both sides of politics, who have been ushered into public life through the portals of the nomination boroughs, which the Reform Bill has now for ever closed. He took an active part in

64.
Early history
of Sir Samuel
Romilly.

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¹ 46 Geo. III.
c. 135.
² Romilly's
Speeches and
Memoir, i.
29.

many of the most important debates which subsequently occurred in parliament, particularly those on the slave trade, the regency, and Catholic emancipation; and he had already attempted, and in part effected, a great improvement in the law of bankruptcy,¹ when his attention was attracted by the state of the criminal law; to the amelioration of which, during the remainder of his parliamentary career, his efforts were chiefly directed.²

65.
His political
principles and
private vir-
tues.

His political principles were those of the Whig party; and though not altogether free from factious ambition, yet the improvement of the human race was the object for which his philanthropic heart beat to the latest hour of existence. Exemplary and affectionate in the relations of private life, he contrived, in the midst of all the labours and anxieties consequent on his legal and parliamentary career, to find time for domestic society. The seventh day of rest was never broken in upon by his labours; and when making £12,000 a-year at the bar, and actively discharging his duties in the House of Commons, he contrived to keep up his acquaintance with all the literature of the day, as well as the studies of his earlier years: a fact which, however inexplicable to those who are unaccustomed to such exertions, is verified by every day's experience of those who are; and which arises from the circumstance, that to the mind trained to intellectual toil, recreation is found rather in change of employment, or a new direction being given to thought, than in entire cessation from labour.

66.
Condition of
English cri-
minal law at
this period.

The condition of the English criminal law at this period was indeed such as to call for the serious attention of every real friend to his country and mankind. Political power having for a long, almost immemorial period, been really vested in the wealthier classes, either of the landed or commercial orders, penal legislation had been mainly directed to the punishment of the crimes which had been found by experience to be dangerous to their possessions, and had, in consequence, been founded on no principle, and regulated by no justice. Every interest in the state, during the course of several centuries, had by turns enjoyed influence sufficient to procure the passing of laws denouncing capital punishments against the perpetrators of crimes peculiarly hostile to its own

property; and these successive additions to the penal code were silently acquiesced in by all other classes, upon the understanding that a similar protection would be extended to them when circumstances seemed to render it necessary. Thus the landholders, whose influence had so long been predominant in the Chapel of St Stephen's, had obtained a huge addition to the catalogue of capital punishments for offences trenching on their freeholds. The trading classes had been equally diligent in having the punishment of death affixed to theft from the person, within shops, or from warehouses or manufactories. Shipmasters and merchants had done the same for the protection of their interests: and so strongly were the dangers of forgery felt in a mercantile community, that it had come to pass into a sort of axiom, which obtained universal assent, that nothing but that terrible sanction could preserve from fearful invasion, by means of that crime, the rights of the great body of traders throughout the empire.

The result of this separate and selfish system of legislation had come to be, that in 1809, when Sir Samuel Romilly set about the reformation of this blood-stained code, the punishment of death was by statute affixed to above six hundred different crimes, while the increasing humanity of the age had induced so wide a departure from the strict letter of the law, that out of eighteen hundred and seventy-two persons capitally convicted at the Old Bailey in seven years, from 1803 to 1810, for the less grave offences, only *one* had been executed. All those concerned in the prosecution of offences combined their efforts to mitigate in practice its sanguinary enactments. Individuals injured declined to give information or prosecute, unless in cases of serious injury, or when their passions were strongly roused; witnesses hung back from giving explicit evidence at the trials, lest their consciences should be haunted by the recollection of what they deemed, often not without reason, as little better than judicial murder. Jurymen made light of their oaths, and introduced a most distressing uncertainty into the result of criminal prosecutions; and even judges often caught at the evanescent distinctions which the acuteness of lawyers had made between offences,¹ and willingly admitted the subtleties which

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67.
Results
which had
arisen from
its neglect.

¹ Romilly's
Speech, Feb.
9, 1810.
Speeches, i.
106, 107.
Parl. Deb.
xvi. 366, 372.

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were to save the offender's life. The consequence was, that not more than two-thirds of the persons committed for trial were convicted; the remainder, after contracting the whole contagion of a prison, were let loose upon the world, matured in all the habits of iniquity; and the depraved criminals, seeing so many chances of escape before and after apprehension, ceased to have any serious fears for the uncertain penalties of criminal justice.

68.
Principles for
which Sir
Samuel
Romilly and
Sir James
Mackintosh
contended.

The principles, on the other hand, for which Sir Samuel Romilly, and, after his lamented death in 1818, Sir James Mackintosh, contended, were, that the essential quality of criminal law, without which all its provisions would be of little avail, was *certainly*; that, to attain this, the cordial co-operation of all classes of society, as well as the activity of the constable and the diligence of the prosecutor, were requisite; that this co-operation could never be secured, unless the punishments affixed by law to offences were such as to offer no violence to the feelings of justice which are found in every bosom; and that these feelings would never have been implanted so strongly as they are in the human heart, if the interests of society had required their perpetual violation. These principles, which require only to be stated to command the cordial assent of every intelligent mind, have since been fully carried into effect in every part of Great Britain; the penalty of death has come to be practically abolished for almost every offence except murder; and secondary punishments have been apportioned out, as accurately as the vast simultaneous growth of crime rendered practicable, to the real merits of the offences to which they were affixed. If the result has hitherto exhibited no diminution, but on the contrary been co-existent with a vast increase in the sum-total of delinquencies, it has at least produced, it is to be hoped, a decrease in the more atrocious and violent offences. A much greater degree of certainty has been introduced into criminal proceedings; and in Scotland, in particular, where the system of penal jurisprudence has long been established on a far better footing than in England, the certainty of punishment to the guilty, and of acquittal to the innocent, has attained a height unparalleled in any

other age or country of the globe.* With the diminution of its sanguinary enactments, however, the English criminal law has felt the difficulty of secondary penalties; the multitude of convicts who required transportation has caused the evils and sufferings of the penal settlements to increase in an alarming degree; the prisons in the mother country, though greatly enlarged, cannot contain the multitude of offenders; and society at home, overburdened with a flood of juvenile delinquency, has long laboured under the evils of inadequate jail accommodation, for which all the efforts of philanthropy, and all the improvements of prison discipline, have hitherto proved an insufficient remedy.

In truth, this matter of the entire abolition of capital punishments except in cases of deliberate murder, and the relaxation of secondary penalties from transportation to imprisonment, has now been carried to an excessive length, and it will be well to reconsider the subject before it is too late. Sir Samuel Romilly's principles were strongly recommended by their appeal to humanity, one of the noblest passions which can fill the breast; and unquestionably the English law, when he commenced its reformation, exhibited a hideous mass, in many of its enactments, of unobserved, selfish, and sanguinary legislation. But there is a medium in all things; the bow bent too far one way is apt in its rebound to go too far another. He was misled by the usual error of the virtuous and the benevolent in that, and perhaps in every age—an undue estimate of human nature—when he ascribed the alarming increase of crime then prevalent chiefly to the nominal severity and real uncertainty of criminal law. Its true cause lay much deeper, and was to be found in the native corruption of the human heart, and the ten-

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69.
Reflections
on this
subject.

* Table of the result of criminal commitments in Scotland, England, and Ireland, in the years 1832 and 1837.

1832.	Committed.	Convicted.	Acquitted.	Proportions of Convictions to Acquittals.
England,	20,829	14,947	3716	4½ to 1
Ireland,	16,056	9759	2449	4 to 1
Scotland,	2431	1599	64	24 to 1
1837.				
England,	23,612	17,096	4388	4 to 1
Ireland,	14,804	9536	3011	3½ to 1
Scotland,	3126	2358	229	11 to 1

—PORTER'S *Parl. Tables for 1832*, pp. 80, 88; and 1837, 117, 118.

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dency of increasing wealth and enhanced desires to bring more vehemently into action its wicked propensities. This is now decisively proved by the result: the new system has been adopted; punishment has been relaxed to a degree probably never contemplated by Romilly or Mackintosh; and the consequence has been an increase of crime unparalleled in English history, and far exceeding any thing known under the more rigid system of former times. It has tripled, and in Scotland nearly quadrupled, in twenty-five years, during which the mild system has been in operation; being a rate of increase in England twice, and in Scotland three times, as great as that of the numbers of the people.*

70. The conclusion to be drawn from this is, not that we should revert to the old and sanguinary enactments of the eighteenth century, with their occasional severity and general opportunities of escape; but that, discarding all visionary theories as to the innocence of human nature, and all vice being owing to evil communication and erroneous institutions, we should steadily contemplate man as he is—variously compounded of great and noble, and base and vicious inclinations; the former requiring constant care for their development, the latter springing up unbidden in the human breast. Education, if unaccompanied with sedulous moral training, only aggravates the evil: it puts weapons into the hands of the wicked; it renders men able and accomplished devils. Acknowledging with humility that it is by the spread of religious instruction and the extension of virtuous habits that the reform which can alone be in the end efficacious, that of the human heart, is to be effected, the wise statesman will not despise the secondary aid which is to be derived from penal law and the justice and solemnity of criminal punishments. And it will probably be found in the end, by general observation, what no small experience in these matters has convinced the author of,—that vice in the classes where it is in a manner hereditary is incapable of reformation by any length even of solitary confinement *at home*; and that it is in the rigorous and unsparing application of the punishment of transportation that the only effectual remedy for the great and growing evil of constant

Views recom-
mended by
experience on
this subject.

* See Appendix, A, Chap. lxiv.

increase of crime is to be found. And if that system were vigorously carried into execution—if a first imprisonment was in every instance made so long as to teach the young novice in crime an honest trade, and the second conviction invariably followed by removal to a distant colony, the continual stream of depravity which now pollutes the British islands would be lessened; the offenders would be removed to a sphere where their old connexions would be broken off, and the means of real improvement put in their power; and the prisons of these islands would be converted into vast workshops, whence skilled and competent workmen would issue forth to increase and establish our own colonial possessions.*

Important in their ultimate effects as were these beginnings of interior reformation, of which society, from the important changes which it underwent during the progress of the war, stood so much in need, they yet yielded, in the magnitude of their present consequences, to the three great subjects of internal debate in parliament and the nation during the years 1811 and 1812; viz. the question of the currency, the repeal of the Orders in Council, and the prosecution of the war in the Peninsula. It has been already noticed† how Mr Pitt, driven by hard necessity, had adopted the momentous step of suspending cash payments in February 1797; and that, after more than one temporary act had been passed, postponing the period for their resumption, it was at length enacted, by the 44 Geo. III. c. 1, that the restriction in favour of the Bank should continue till six months after the conclusion of a general peace. Allusion has also been more than once made to the prodigious effect which this unavoidable measure had in raising prices and vivifying industry during the war;‡ and no one can doubt that it was in the great extension of the currency, which took place from 1797 to 1810, that the resources were mainly found which provided both for the long-continued efforts with which the war was attended, and the gigantic expenditure of its later years. Now that the true principles which

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71.
Review of the
measures of
Mr Pitt con-
nected with
the currency.

* To keep a convict seven years in prison, with all the advantages of his labour, costs about three times what it does to transport him at once to New South Wales.

† *Ante*, Chap. xxii. §§ 5, 6.

‡ *Ante*, Chap. xii. §§ 69, 70; Chap. xxii. §§ 6, 7; Chap. xxxiv. §§ 101, 102.

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regulate this important subject have, from long and dear-bought experience, come to be so well understood, it may readily be conceived how the increase of the bank issues, from eleven millions in spring 1797 to twenty-one millions in 1810, and twenty-seven millions in 1815, must have tended both to alter the prices of commodities of all sorts throughout the empire, and to induce the extraordinary and unprecedented vigour which was conspicuous during all that period, both in our foreign commerce and internal industry, and which supported the vast and long-continued national efforts.*

72.
Monetary
changes dur-
ing 1809 and
1810.

In the course of the years 1809 and 1810, however, the combination of a variety of causes produced an extraordinary demand for an enlarged currency for domestic transactions, at the very time that the whole gold, and great part of the silver specie of the country, were drained off for the purposes of foreign warfare. The prodigious increase in the exports and imports during these years, in consequence of the opening of the German harbours in the former and of the smuggled trade to the Baltic in the latter, which has been already noticed,† necessarily required an extended circulation; and the influence of that demand speedily appeared in the enlarged issue of bank-notes, as well as the extraordinary increase in commercial paper discounted at the Bank of England for the whole of that period; the former of which, from fourteen millions in 1808, had risen to twenty-three millions in the beginning of 1811; while the latter, during the same time, had advanced from thirteen to twenty millions. Yet such was the scarcity of specie in Great Britain during these years, in consequence of the absorbing demand which the Austrian and Spanish wars occasioned for the precious metals, and the necessity of importing above 1,500,000 quarters of grain in 1810 from the bad harvest of that year, that the bullion coined at the Bank during both put together was little more than six hundred thousand pounds. The immense drain of specie to the Peninsula, to meet the expenses of the war, had gone on progressively increasing, until, in the end of 1810, it had risen to the enormous amount of £420,000 a-month, or £5,040,000 a-year. The money thus required could be

* See Appendix, B, Chap. lxiv.

† *Ante*, Chap. lxiv. § 60.

transmitted only in coin or bullion, as English paper would not pass in the interior of Spain ; and although government made the most strenuous exertions to collect specie for the service of the army, yet they could not by all their efforts obtain it in sufficient quantities ; and such as they could get was transmitted at a loss, from the state of the exchanges, of nearly thirty per cent. The demand for specie on the Continent, during and before the Austrian war, had been such, that gold had almost entirely disappeared from circulation, both in France and Germany ; and even silver could hardly be procured in sufficient quantities to meet the ordinary necessities either of government or the people.¹

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¹ Well. Desp.
April 15,
1810. Gurw.
vi. 37, and
vi. 155, 168 ;
and May
16, 1810, vi.
116, and
June 6, 1810.
Bign. ii. 46.

This singular and anomalous state of matters naturally and strongly roused the attention at once of government, the commercial classes, and all thinking men in Great Britain at this period. The simultaneous occurrence of a vast increase of foreign trade and domestic industry, with a proportional augmentation of the paper currency, and the total disappearance of specie of every kind from circulation, was a phenomenon so extraordinary, that it attracted, as well it might, the anxious attention of the legislature. A committee was appointed to inquire into and report on the subject, in the session of 1810 ; and it embraced many of the ablest men, on both sides of politics, who then sat in parliament. MR HORNER, whose premature and lamented death, some years afterwards, alone prevented him from rising to the highest eminence on the Opposition side, was the chairman, and took the leading share in the preparation of the memorable report which the committee prepared on the subject. But Mr Canning and MR HUSKISSON were also among its members ; and in the intimate connexion which took place between these eminent men on both sides of politics, during the long and arduous examinations of evidence in the course of their investigations, is to be found the first appearance and unobserved spring of an element in the financial and commercial policy of Great Britain, attended with consequences of unbounded importance in the future history of the British empire. The opinions of the majority of the committee were embodied in certain resolutions,² moved by Mr Horner,

73.
Impression it
produced in
the legisla-
ture.

Feb. 1.

² Parl. Deb.
xv. 270. Ann.
Reg. 1811,
43.

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74.
Arguments
in favour of
the Bullion
Report by
Mr Horner
and Mr Hus-
kisson.

its chairman, which were strenuously supported by the whole Whig party; while those of the minority, which were entertained also by government, were embraced in counter-resolutions, brought forward by Mr Vansittart, and backed by all the strength of the administration.

On the part of the Opposition, it was urged by Mr Huskisson, Mr Horner, and, with one exception,* by Mr Canning:—"The facts on which the present question hinges are sufficiently ascertained, and cannot be disputed on the other side. It appears, from the evidence which was laid before the committee, that, under the existing laws, in force anterior to the period of the bank restriction, no contract or undertaking could be legally satisfied, unless the coin rendered in payment shall weigh in the proportion of $\frac{3}{4}$ parts of 5 pennyweights, 8 grains of standard gold, for each pound sterling; nor in silver coin for any sum exceeding £25, unless such coin shall weigh in the proportion of $\frac{3}{4}$ parts of a pound troy of standard silver for each pound sterling. When it was enacted by the authority of parliament in 1797, that the payment of the promissory notes of the Bank of England should be suspended, it was not the intention of the legislature that any alteration should take place in the value of such promissory notes; but it now appears that the actual value of the promissory notes of the Bank of England, measuring such value by weight of standard gold and silver, has, for a considerable period, been much less than what is established by law as the legal tender in payment of any money contract; that the fall which has thus taken place in the value of Bank of England notes, has been occasioned by a too redundant issue of paper currency both by the Bank of England and the country banks; and that the excess has originated in the want of that check on the issues of the Bank of England which existed before the suspension of cash payments.

* Mr Canning in general coincided with the whole views of Mr Huskisson and the majority of the Bullion Committee; and he supported their principles in a speech of uncommon power and singularly lucid argument. But he dissented from them upon one very material practical point, viz. the *period* which it was expedient parliament should fix for the resumption of cash payments. The Committee reported in favour of an unconditional resumption in two years from the time of the debate, (May 1811;) and Mr Huskisson and Mr Horner strenuously contended for that period; but Mr Canning deprecated so sudden a return to a cash standard during the continuance of hostilities, and in lieu proposed that it should take place at the term of six months after a general peace, to which it stood at that time by law limited.—See *Parl. Deb.* xix. 1115-1126.

"The exchanges with foreign countries have, for a considerable period, been unfavourable to this country in the highest degree. But although the adverse circumstances of our trade, and the large amount of our military expenditure abroad, may have contributed to turn our exchanges with the continent of Europe against us; yet the extraordinary degree in which they have been depressed for so long a period can have arisen only from the depreciation which has arisen in the relative value of the currency, as compared with the money of foreign countries. The only way of guarding against these manifold dangers is by a vigilant watch being kept up by the Bank of England on the foreign exchanges, as well as the price of bullion, with a view to regulate the amount of its issues. But the only certain mode of providing against an excess of paper currency, is by establishing by law the legal convertibility upon demand of all such currency into the lawful coin of the realm. It may not be expedient to make such a change suddenly, but it must be done ere long; and two years appears to be a reasonable time within which the alteration may with safety be effected, instead of the period of six months after the ratification of a definite treaty of peace, which at present is established by law. The necessity of having recourse to such a measure is obvious. A pound of gold, and £46, 14s. 6d. being equal to each other, and in fact the same thing under different names, any circulating medium which purports to represent that amount of silver ought by law to be exchangeable at will for a pound of gold. But under the operation of the Bank Restriction Act, a pound of gold has now come to be equivalent to £56 in paper currency. The difference, therefore, between £56 and £46, 14s. 6d.—or £9, 5s. 6d.—is the measure of the depreciation of the currency, or the amount which every creditor in an old obligation, dated prior to the year 1797, to the extent of £56, loses, if his debtor now pays up his debt in the paper currency—that is to say, every creditor of that standing loses just a fifth by the present state of matters.

"It would be monstrous to imagine that so gross an injustice ever was intended by parliament, when they established as a temporary measure, and under the pres-

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75.

Unfavourable
state of the
foreign ex-
changes.

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76.
Injustice
which has
accrued from
the deprecia-
tion of the
paper cur-
rency.

sure of unavoidable necessity, the currency of bank paper as a legal tender. What could have been the consistency of the legislature, which, leaving unrepealed and unmodified the regulations which take away the character of a legal tender from every guinea weighing less than the legal standard of 5 dwts. 8 grains, should give it to a bank-note, purporting to be of the same denomination, but the real value of which at this moment is only 4 dwts. 14 grains, or in other words, about three shillings *less* than the lightest guinea which is allowed to pass in payment? Yet this is precisely what the Act of 1797 has now come in practice to produce; and the question is, whether this anomalous and unjust state of matters can be allowed to continue. To sell or to buy guineas at a higher rate than 21s. each, in bank paper, is an offence at present punishable by fine and imprisonment; but though the penalties attach to the unhappy holder of a *heavy* guinea, the fortunate possessor of a *light* one is entitled by law to sell it for what it will bring, which is about 24s. 3d. Can there be a more absurd state of matters, or one more directly operating as a bounty on clipping, defacing, and melting down the coin; and need it be wondered at, if, with such temptations held out by the operation of law to the commission of these offences, the gold coin has entirely disappeared from circulation?

77.
Gold as the
standard of
value.

“By the common consent of mankind in all civilised countries, the precious metals have been received as the fittest standard for measuring the value of all other commodities, and are employed as the universal equivalent for effecting their exchange. Gold in this country, as silver is in Hamburg, is really and exclusively the fixed measure of the rising and the falling in value of all other commodities in reference to each other. The article itself which forms this standard never can rise or fall with reference to this measure—that is, with reference *to itself*. A pound weight of gold never can be worth a pound and a quarter of gold. A bank-note, on the other hand, is not a commodity—it is only an engagement for the payment of a certain specified quantity of money. It cannot vary its value in the exchange for any commodity, except in reference to the increase or diminution of such commodity in gold. Gold, therefore, is the test by which the

value of bank-notes must be tried ; and if a bank-note, as stated by the witnesses in the evidence, instead of being worth the standard value of 5 dwts. 3 grains of gold, is only worth 4 dwts. 8 grains—it is really worth only the latter amount of gold in exchange for any other commodity. A general increase of prices, therefore, is not an indication of the depreciation of its currency. Such an effect may be produced by many other causes, as, for example, an increase in the supply of the precious metals ; but every considerable or durable increase in the price of the precious metals, which form the basis of a currency, cannot be ascribed to any thing but the depreciation of such currency, even if the price of all other commodities were to be falling at the same time.

“Depreciation of a currency may be produced either by the standard coin containing less of the precious metal which forms that standard than it is certified by law to contain, or by an excess in the amount of that currency. The first effect took place to a great extent in the reign of William III., when the proportion of precious metals in the current coin was about thirty per cent less than it was certified to contain. To that evil a remedy was applied by the re-coinage in 1773, and since that time this evil has not been felt in this country. The existing depreciation, therefore, must be occasioned by excess. Such depreciation cannot exist for any length of time in any country, unless its currency consists partly of paper, partly of the precious metals. If the coin itself be undepreciated, but nevertheless the currency is so, which is the present case, that can arise only from an excess in the paper circulating at par with the coin. The necessary effect of such a state of things is, that gold will be sent abroad to the better markets which are there to be found. And the only possible way of applying a remedy to this evil is to compel the bank to pay in gold, and give the market price for guineas. By so doing, indeed, you will at first subject that establishment to a loss equal to the difference between the market and the mint price of that metal ; but the effect of this will be, in the end, to force it to contract its issues and restore the value of the currency ; and, till that is done, whatever it gains by avoiding this liability is just so much lost to the holders of its notes.”¹

78.

Causes of the depreciation of the currency at various times.

¹ Parl. Deb. xix. 798, 1098. Huskisson's Speeches, i. 57, 123.

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79.
Arguments
against it by
the Minis-
terial party.

On the other hand it was maintained by Mr Vansittart and Lord Castlereagh : — “ It is a matter of equal regret and surprise to behold a committee composed of gentlemen so sagacious and well-informed, so conversant in business, and respectable in every point of view, arriving at conclusions so very opposite to those which the evidence before the committee, as well as the good sense of the nation, has long since pointed out for general adoption. The last resolution is the substantial practical recommendation of the Bullion Committee ; the other resolutions are only explanatory and introductory, and might, with perfect innocence and safety, be placed unanimously on the journals. It is the resumption of cash payments, within a definite and not distant period, which is the real point at issue ; and all argument is misapplied which is not directed in the first, as well as last instance, to that leading point. We are all agreed that a mixed circulation of bank-notes, convertible at pleasure into cash and coin, is the most desirable circulating medium which can be conceived ; because, if properly regulated, it possesses the solidity of a metallic with the cheapness of a paper currency. We differ only about the means, and the fit season, for returning to this state. The Bullion Committee are for attempting it positively and absolutely, without regard to consequences, or even practicability ; we are for waiting till a violent and unnatural state of things shall have ceased, during the continuance of which our object cannot be gained, while the attempt to accomplish it would only aggravate the evil.

80.
State of the
metallic cur-
rency of the
kingdom.

“ The foundations of all our reasonings on this subject must be an appeal to experience ; and the resolutions which we are to submit to the House are, therefore, not abstract propositions, but a statement of facts. The fundamental position on the other side, viz. that there is a certain fixed and definite standard of value, arising from a given weight and purity of the precious metals being used in the formation of coin in this country, is erroneous. Any sum under £25 may, it is notorious, be legally discharged in silver coin ; and such is the degree in which the silver coin of various denominations now current has been worn away by use, or diminished by fraud, that the actual amount of silver which a creditor holding an

obligation under that sum will receive, may vary from 5 lbs. 5 oz. 15 dwt. to 8 lbs. 15 dwt. according as he receives his payment in the worn sixpence or the fresh crown-pieces of the realm. The act of 1774, limiting the legal tender of silver to sums below £25, expired in 1783 : and from that time down to 1798, obligations to any amount might have been discharged in these clipped and worn-out sixpences, then current : and such coins are still in practice the great circulating medium by which the transactions of the country are carried on. Even in regard to the gold coin, no fixed standard was introduced till 1774 : so that all the boasted fixity of that part of the currency dates only from that comparatively recent period.

“The right of establishing and regulating the legal money of the kingdom, at all times vested in the sovereign or the crown, with concurrence of parliament, cannot be abrogated except by the same authority. The promissory-notes of the Bank of England, however, have hitherto passed in common estimation, and in the usual transactions of men, as equivalent to gold ; although at various periods, both before and after the Bank restriction, the exchanges between Great Britain and other countries have been unfavourable to Great Britain ; and, as a matter of course, in such periods the market prices of gold and silver have risen considerably above the mint prices, and the coinage of money at the mint has been unavoidably either partially or wholly suspended. Such unfavourable exchanges and rises in the price of bullion have usually occurred in the course of foreign wars, when the greater part of the metallic currency was carried abroad to conduct the operations of our fleets and armies ; as during the wars of William III. and Queen Anne, the greater part of the Seven Years’ War, and the American war. These causes all conspired together to produce the extraordinary pressure upon the Bank in February 1797, and rendered unavoidable the suspension of cash payments at that period : and they again occurred with still greater severity in the two years which preceded the peace of Amiens. In these instances, the unfavourable state of the exchanges, and the high price of bullion, do not appear to have been produced by the restriction of

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81.
Effects of the
state of the
foreign ex-
change on the
currency.

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cash payments, or any excess in the issue of notes ; inas-
much as all the instances, except the last, occurred pre-
viously to any restriction on such cash payments ; and
because the price of bullion has frequently been highest,
and the exchanges most unfavourable, at periods when
the issues of the bank-notes have been considerably
diminished, and they have been afterwards restored to
their ordinary rates though those issues have been
increased.

82.
Prices of gold
at various
times.

“ During seventy-eight years, ending with January
1797, the price of gold has been at and under the mint
price for twenty-eight years, and above the mint price
fifty years ; and during that period the price of standard
silver has been at and under the mint price three and two
months only. The exchange with Hamburg fell, during
the three latter years of the American war, full eight per
cent, and the price of foreign gold rose from £3, 17s. to
£4, 2s. an ounce, and the price of dollars nearly in the
same proportion ; while the bank-notes in circulation
were, during the same period, diminished from nine to
six millions. Again, in December 1804, the rate of
exchange with Hamburg rapidly rose to 34, and the price
of gold fell to its former standard of £3, 17s. before
February 1787. The amount of bank-notes in February
1787, was £8,600,000, and in February 1791, £11,700,000 ;
and between these years the sum of £10,700,000 was
coined in gold, and yet the exchange with Ham-
burg rose three per cent. The bank-notes, which in
February 1795 were £11,500,000, were reduced in Feb-
ruary 1797 to £8,600,000, during which time the exchange
with Hamburg fell three per cent ; and on the 1st
February 1798, they were increased to £13,200,000,
during which period the exchange had risen nine per
cent. Examples of this sort prove to a demonstration
how extremely fallacious is the idea that the unfavour-
able state of the foreign exchanges is to be ascribed to
any excess in the issues of paper at home : they show
that the exchanges depend on a variety of other circum-
stances independent of the home currency, and not
unfrequently they are highest when the paper circula-
tion is most abundant.

“ It is not difficult to perceive what are the circum-

stances in our foreign relations which have produced the present unfavourable state of the exchanges. The trade with the Continent has, from the effect of Napoleon's decrees against British commerce, become hazardous, precarious, and expensive; it is every where loaded with excessive charges: the trade with America has been precarious and interrupted; the naval and military expenditure has for some years been very great; and the price of grain, owing to a succession of bad crops, has during the same period been very high. Any of these causes is sufficient to account for the drain of specie from this country; much more the whole of them taken together. The amount of the currency of the country must bear a certain proportion to its trade, revenue, and expenditure. Now, the average amount of exports, imports, and revenue of England, for some years past, has been so great as absolutely to require an enlarged circulation; for all the three have nearly doubled since the period when the bank restrictions were first imposed. If the average amount of bank-notes in circulation at the two periods is compared, it will be found not to have advanced in the same proportion.* And how, when our metallic currency was drawn abroad by the necessities of foreign commerce and warfare, was the ordinary circulation of the country to be supplied, and its immense transactions conducted, if the increase in bank-notes, now so loudly complained of, had not taken place? The extraordinary circumstances in which the kingdom has lately been placed, therefore, are amply sufficient to account for the unfavourable state of the exchanges, without any change in the internal value of the currency, or any reason being afforded for its contraction. It is highly important, indeed, that the restriction as to payments in cash should be removed as soon as the political and commercial relations of the country shall render it compatible with the public interest; but under the present situation of the state, in all these particulars,

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83.

Influence on
them of the
state of our
foreign rela-
tions.

* Average exports and imports of Great Britain during three years before Feb. 1797, £48,732,000 1811, £77,981,000			
Expenditure,	.	42,855,000	82,205,000
Bank-notes,	.	10,782,000	19,541,000

No less than £57,000,000 worth of gold coin had been coined during the reign of George III., of which a large portion was in circulation at the first of these periods, but a very small portion only at the second.—See MR VANSITTART'S Resolution, May 13, 1811; *Parl. Deb.* xx. 73, 74.

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84.
True nature
of the depre-
ciation of the
currency.

it would be highly dangerous to do so before the period fixed by law, namely, six months after the conclusion of a definitive treaty of peace.

"There is a depreciation of bank-notes compared with legal coin, and there is a depreciation compared with the price of commodities. But the depreciation on which the Bullion Report so largely dwells, is a depreciation different from either of these. It is a depreciation compared with the money of other countries. What is the meaning of such a depreciation, when no one ever imagined that Bank of England paper could pass current any where but in Great Britain? What would be the effect of an order upon the bank just now to resume cash payments in two years? Would it not be to compel them to purchase gold coin at any loss, in order to meet the certain drain about to come upon them? All the witnesses examined before the committee agree in this, that there is an irresistible tendency at present in the guineas of England to go abroad. Some ascribe it to the necessity of cash remittances to meet the balance of trade, others to the demand for gold on the Continent; but all concur in the fact, and the state of the foreign exchanges sufficiently demonstrates its reality. How, then, is the Bank of England to be able singly to stand the torrent produced by the commercial and political relations of the whole globe? Is it fair, equitable, or prudent, to expose that establishment to the certainty of the enormous loss consequent on such a contest? And is this a time to make an experiment so hazardous to the solvency of government and the credit of the nation, when the empire is engaged in the eighteenth year of a costly war, waged for its very existence, and every guinea that can be spared from its domestic necessities is absolutely requisite to maintain the expensive contest in the Peninsula, which alone averts the horrors of invasion from the British shores?"

1 Mr Vansittart's Resolutions, May 9 and 13, 1811. Parl. Deb. xix. 919, 967, 1128; xx. 73, 74, 128.

Upon a division, Mr Horner's resolutions were lost by a majority of seventy-six—the numbers being seventy-five to one hundred and fifty-one; and the counter-resolutions of Mr Vansittart were, a few days after, carried by a majority of forty—the numbers being forty-two to eighty-two.¹

Few subjects in the modern history of England have been discussed both in and out of parliament with more

vehemence and ability than this Bullion Report; and none was ever fraught, both in its immediate and ultimate effects, with more momentous consequences. In fact, the very existence of the nation was at stake in the discussion; and it may now with safety be pronounced, that if the arguments urged by Mr Horner, Mr Huskisson, and the Bullion Committee had proved successful, and parliament had acted upon their recommendations, the national independence must have been destroyed, and England rendered a province of France long before the Moscow catastrophe arrived. The very fact on which their whole argument was rested, viz. that the difference between the market and the mint price of guineas had come to be twenty-five per cent, was decisive against the practicability of restoring cash payments, at least till the pressure of the war had come to an end. For what must have been the effect of a compulsitor to pay in gold purchased by the bank at such a loss, and issued to the public at such a profit? Evident ruin to that establishment, bankruptcy to the government, and an abandonment of all the enterprises, vital to the state, in which the empire was engaged. Wellington, deprived of all his pecuniary resources in Spain, would have been compelled to withdraw from the Peninsula. In the mortal struggle between domestic insolvency and disaster abroad, all our foreign efforts must have been abandoned. A force paralysing him at home as great as that which drew back Hannibal from the scene of his victories in Italy, would have forced the British hero from the theatre of his destined triumphs in Spain. The crash in England would have come precisely at the crisis of the war; cash payments would have been resumed in May 1813, just after the battle of Lutzen, and on the eve of the armistice of Prague; Napoleon, relieved from the pressure of Wellington's veterans, would have made head against the forces of the north; Austria, in such unpromising circumstances, would never have joined the coalition; Russia, exhausted and discouraged, would have retired to her forests; Germany, unarrayed by British subsidies, would have remained dormant in the strife; and the sun of European freedom would have sunk, perhaps for ever, beneath the wave of Gallic ambition.

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LXIV.

1811.

85.
Reflections
on this sub-
ject. Dangers
of resumption
of cash pay-
ments at this
period.

CHAP.
LXIV.*

1811.

86.
Its effects on
the finances
of Great
Britain.

Even if, by prudential measures and great efforts on the part of the government and the bank, an immediate catastrophe had been avoided, there can be no doubt that the resumption of cash payments at that crisis must, at no distant period, have proved fatal to the finances and public credit of Great Britain. Experience has now cast a broad and steady light on this subject. It is known that the adoption of this step in 1819, enforced and carried out as it was by the suppression of small notes in 1826, changed prices at least forty per cent;* that the holders of commodities and property of all descriptions found their capital diminished by that amount in the course of a few years; that debts, augmented in the same proportion, speedily proved fatal to all the overburdened fortunes, whether in land or money, over the country; that bankruptcies, to an unparalleled extent, diffused ruin and misery through the industrious classes; and that the general distress and difficulties of the middle ranks of society produced that wide-spread feeling of discontent, which, ignorant of the real cause of its suffering, and fanned into a flame by the spirit of faction, gave rise to the conflagration which brought about the great organic change in 1832. If such have been the effects of this momentous step in a period of profound peace, universal commerce, and comparatively light national burdens, what must have been its results if it had occurred in the crisis of the war, and in the presence of Napoleon, with the income-tax forcibly extracting all the surplus profits of the people, commerce to continental Europe almost closed by the military power of France, and a gigantic naval and military establishment exhausting all the resources of the state, and yet alone preserving the nation from foreign subjugation?

87.
Errors of Mr
Huskisson
and his party.

The fundamental error of Mr Huskisson and the bullion committee on this subject consisted in the principles, which they laid down as axioms, that the measure of the depreciation of the currency was to be found in the difference between the market and the mint price of gold; and that the cause of the high price of the precious metals was to be sought for in the over-issue of paper rather

* See Alison's "*England in 1815 and 1845*," the Table at end—where this is demonstrated by the prices given for fifty years back.

than the absorption of specie by foreign states. Both positions, it has now been proved by experience, were erroneous, or rather embraced only a part of the truth; and, what is singular enough, the first erred chiefly from underrating the depreciation arising from excessive issue, on which the bullion committee themselves so strongly founded. Assuming the depreciation to be measured by the difference between the market and the mint price of gold, they estimated it at 25 per cent, whereas there can be no doubt that it was at that period nearer 75 per cent; and a revulsion of prices in most articles, to more than half that amount, took place upon the resumption of cash payments when the bill of 1819 came into operation, even during a period of profound peace. In fact, the relative money and mint price of the precious metals had nothing to do with the question of depreciation of the currency; for, as bank-notes never sank in value compared with specie, whatever party spirit may have affirmed to the contrary, the measure of the depreciation which undoubtedly took place was to be sought for, not in the relative value of the metallic and paper currency, but in the diminished value of the *whole currency*, gold, silver, and paper, when compared with that of all other commodities. And the proof of that was to be found in the fact, not that gold was at a premium of 25 per cent, but that wheat had, on an average of ten years preceding, advanced 100 per cent, and was then selling at 110 shillings the quarter. The high premium on gold, on which so much stress was laid, was evidently owing to the political or natural causes which at that period caused the precious metals to be all drained out of the country; and we who have seen the bank of England reel, and the United States bank of America fall,* under the effects of the drain of £6,000,000 sterling from the vaults of the former of these establishments to purchase grain from continental Europe in 1839, for the consumption of the British islands, can feel no surprise that gold was at an extravagant premium in 1810 and 1811 in London, when £4,171,000

* In Mr Biddle's able paper on the causes of the suspension of cash payments by the United States Bank in October 1839, the principal reason assigned was the drain upon the Bank of England during the preceding year, from the vast importation of grain, in consequence of the bad harvest in Great Britain in 1838, and the consequent contraction of the British circulating medium, and pressure upon the money market of America.

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1811.

88.
Long-con-
tinued public
delusion on
this subject.

was, in the former of these years, sent out of the country for grain alone ; and, in both years, above £6,000,000 was annually remitted to the Peninsula, in specie and bullion, for the service of the English and Portuguese armies.

It is remarkable that a measure fraught, as every one now sees, with such obvious and utter ruin, both to the nation and the individuals of whom it is composed, was at that period supported by the ablest men in parliament, and many of the profoundest thinkers in the country ; that the report which recommended such a perilous and destructive change was for above twenty years held up as the model of political wisdom ; and that the ministry who, by resisting it, saved their country from destruction, more perhaps than by any act in their whole career, incurred the imputation, with the great bulk of the succeeding generation, of being behind the lights of the age. It is the more remarkable that the general delusion should so long have prevailed on the subject, when it is recollected, not only that the true principles of this apparently difficult but really simple branch of national economy, which are now generally admitted, were at the time most ably expounded by many men both in and out of parliament ;* but that, in the examination of some of the leading merchants of London before the parliamentary committees on the subject, the truth was told with a force and a precision which it now appears surprising any one could resist.† This memorable

* Particularly by Sir John Sinclair, whose sagacious mind early and clearly perceived the fatal effect of the proposed resumption of cash payments at that critical period, especially on that great national interest, agriculture, to the support and improvement of which his long and useful life was devoted.—See *Life of Sir John Sinclair*, ii. 268, by his son, the Rev. John Sinclair, chaplain to the Bishop of London ; a work full of valuable information both historical and political, by an author who unites to the talents and industry hereditary in his family, the accomplishments of a scholar, the learning of a divine, and the philanthropy of a Christian.

† The following was the evidence given on the subject of the high price of bullion by Mr Chambers, before the Committee of the House of Commons.

In the examination of Mr Chambers, a gentleman who deservedly enjoys the reputation of great intelligence and extensive information in the commercial world, we find the following evidence :—“ At the mint price of standard gold in this country, how much gold does a bank of England note for one pound represent ? ”—“ Five dwts. three grains.”—“ At the present market price of £4, 12s. per ounce, how much gold do you get for a bank-note of one pound ? ”—“ Four dwts. eight grains.”—“ Do you consider a bank of England note for one pound under these present circumstances as exchangeable in gold for what it represents of that metal ? ”—“ I do not conceive gold to be a fairer standard for bank of England notes than indigo or broad cloth.” Question repeated. “ If it represents twenty shillings of that metal at the coinage price, it is not.”—HUSKISSON'S *Life*, i. 36. Mr Huskisson adds, in these answers this leading doctrine is manfully

example should always be present to the minds of all who are called upon, either theoretically or practically, to deal with so momentous a subject as the monetary concerns of a nation ; and, while it is calculated to inspire distrust in abstract or speculative conclusions, when unsupported by facts, it points in the clearest manner to the wisdom of adhering to those common-sense views which experience has suggested to practical men, and which, however apparently irreconcilable at the moment with theoretical principle, will generally be found to emanate from it in the end, and to have arisen from some unobserved element acting, with a force imperceptible to the theorist but most cogent to the practical man, on the great and complicated maze of human transactions.

WILLIAM HUSKISSON, who first rose to great and deserved celebrity in the course of these important discussions, was a statesman whose career belongs to the pacific but momentous period which intervened between the close of the war and the passing of the Reform Bill. But he was too eminent a man, and exercised too powerful an influence on the fortunes of his country, to be passed over without remark in the annals of Europe during the French Revolution. He was descended from a family of ancient standing but moderate fortune in Staffordshire, and received the elements of education in his native county. He was early sent over to receive the more advanced branches of instruction at Paris, under the direction of Dr Gem, physician to the British Embassy at that metropolis ; and he arrived there in 1789, just in time to witness, and in some degree share, the enthusiasm excited by the capture of the Bastile in that year. The intimate acquaintance which at this period he formed with Franklin and Jefferson, as well as the popular leaders in the Club of 1789, of which he was a member, had a powerful influence on his character, which was never obliterated through life, and eventually exercised no inconsiderable effect on the fortunes of his country, to the chief direction of the commercial concerns of which his great abilities ultimately raised him.¹

and ingenuously asserted and maintained ; and all who stand up for the undervalued value of bank paper, however disguised their language, must ultimately come to the same issue.—*Ibid.*

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1811.

89.
Birth and
early history
of Mr Hus-
kisson.

¹ Huskisson's
Speeches and
Life, i. 1, 49.

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1811.

90.
His first entry
into, and
career in par-
liament.

He was first brought into parliament in the close of the year 1796, for the borough of Morpeth, under the nomination of Lord Carlisle; and was about the same time appointed Under-secretary of State for War and the Colonies, in which laborious and important situation his business talents were speedily discovered, and he enjoyed the intimate friendship, and was often called to the private counsels, both of Mr Dundas and Mr Pitt. He retired from office with Mr Pitt in 1801, along with Mr Canning, with whom, throughout life, he maintained the closest intimacy; but was reinstated in the situation of Secretary to the Treasury on Mr Pitt's return to power in 1804; which important trust he continued to hold, with the exception of the brief period when the Whigs were in power, down to the retirement of Mr Canning from Downing Street in September 1809, when he withdrew from government with his brilliant friend, and became a leading member of the liberal section of the Tory party, now in avowed hostility to the administration. In 1814 he was appointed a Commissioner of the Woods and Forests, and from that time till his appointment to the important office of President of the Board of Trade in January 1823, he devoted his attention almost exclusively to subjects of trade, navigation, and political economy, in which his information gave him great weight, and of which, even before he became a cabinet minister, he had acquired almost the exclusive direction. The return to cash payments, by the celebrated bill of 1819, the reciprocity treaties, the abandonment of the navigation laws, and the free-trade system, were mainly occasioned by his influence; and he continued, whether in or out of office, almost entirely to direct the commercial concerns of the nation, till the time of his death, which was occasioned by the frightful accident of the railway train passing over his body on the 15th September 1830, the day on which the line from Liverpool to Manchester was opened.¹

¹ Huskisson's
Mem. i. 235;
Speeches and
Life, vol. i.

9L.
His character
and great
abilities.

He was the first of that class of statesmen who have arisen with the prodigious increase in the commercial transactions and industrial activity of Great Britain in later times, and whose attention is chiefly devoted to the material interests and statistical details of the nation.

He was not endowed by nature with any remarkable oratorical abilities ; he had great powers of thought and application, but neither the fire of genius nor the soul of poetry, in his character. And though in the later years of his life he was listened to with profound attention on both sides of the House, yet this respect was owing rather to the vast stores of varied information which he never failed to bring to bear upon the subject of debate, and the luminous views which he advanced regarding it, than to any faculty of captivating a mixed audience with which he was gifted. His reasoning faculties were of a very high order ; and there is no statesman of that period to whose arguments the historian can now so well refer for an exposition of the principles which, during the interval between the peace and the Reform Bill, governed the commercial and maritime policy of England. He first brought to bear upon legislative measures the resources of statistical research ; and, to the industry and perseverance requisite for such an undertaking, he united the rarer faculty of philosophic reflection, and the power of deducing general principles from an immense detail of particular instances. He was never taken unawares on any subject of that description ; the details of the parliamentary returns were ever present to his memory ; and, by the skilful use which he made of them in debate, he acquired, for the last ten years of his career, a weight in the House of Commons on all subjects connected with trade and navigation which was well-nigh irresistible.

Adam Smith has said that he had no great faith in political arithmetic ; and although nothing is more certain than that the principles of the Baconian philosophy will be found in the end to be applicable to this, as to every other subject of human inquiry, and that a careful examination of facts is the only sure test of the truth or falsehood of any particular opinion, yet here, as elsewhere, principle must be the guide to inquiry. It is only by persons thoroughly imbued with rational views that these valuable results can be obtained ; while to the world in general statistical returns will present an unmeaning mass of figures, and to the speculative politician they may often become a fruitful source of

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92.

His errors.

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error. Statistics are to the science of politics what the observations of Tycho Brahe were to astronomy ; but it requires the mind of a Kepler to deduce from them the true philosophic conclusions. The reason is not that the returns are incorrect, or the figures err, but that such a variety of circumstances enter into the formation of the general result, that the chances are, that, in the outset of statistical inquiry, and before the true causes have been separated from the imaginary ones by experience, conclusions altogether fallacious will often be deduced from perfectly correct premises. Certain it is, that with all the accuracy and extent of Mr Huskisson's information on mercantile subjects, and all the force of his reasoning powers, his conclusions were in great part erroneous ; and that to his influence, more perhaps than that of any other individual, is to be ascribed the false direction of British policy for the last twenty years, alike in regard to monetary, commercial, and colonial affairs. Experience, the great test of truth, has now demonstrated this in the most decisive manner.

93.
 His erroneous
 political prin-
 ciples, and
 their destruc-
 tive effects.

He strenuously advocated the return to a metallic currency in 1819, before any serious progress had been made in the reduction of the debt contracted during the paper one ; and the result has been that the nation has been permanently disabled from paying it off ; and the fall in the money price of all property to the extent of a third, while all debts, public and private, remained at their former amount, produced such a storm of discontent as overthrew the old constitution of the empire. He strenuously advocated the conclusion of reciprocity navigation treaties with the powers of northern Europe ; and the result has been that our shipping with them has been reduced in twenty years to a fourth of its amount, while theirs with us has been quadrupled in the same period, without any advantage whatever having been gained for our manufacturing interests to counterbalance so serious a disadvantage. He strenuously advocated the reduction of the duties on various articles of foreign manufacture ; and the result has been that a severe wound has been inflicted on domestic industry, without foreign jealousy having in so much as a single instance relaxed aught of the burdens on British productions. He strenuously

advocated the propitiation of foreign mercantile powers in the same stage of civilisation as ourselves, even if the consequence should be the discouragement and irritation of our own colonies ; and the result has been, without the slightest relaxation of the prohibitions of the former, a general neglect of those vast colonial interests in which Great Britain can alone find a permanent market for its manufactures, and which, according as they are attached by durable cords to the parent state, or severed from it, must ultimately become either an unbounded source of its strength or the immediate cause of its ruin.*

Another subject which occupied a large portion of the attention of parliament during the years 1811 and 1812, was the repeal of the Orders in Council, which was now anxiously pressed upon government, both by the Opposition and the principal manufacturing cities in the empire ; and in which a statesman reserved for high destinies in future days, HENRY BROUGHAM, first rose to distinguished eminence. It has been already noticed that the British government—justly irritated at the Berlin and Milan decrees, which Napoleon, in the intoxication consequent on the overthrow of Prussia in 1806, had fulminated against English commerce—issued the celebrated Orders in Council, which in effect declared that no ship belonging to any neutral power should be permitted to enter the ports of any country under the government of France, unless it had previously touched at a British harbour.† Between these rigorous orders on the one hand, and the peremptory French decrees on the other, the trade of neutral states was well-nigh destroyed ; for they had no means of avoiding the penalty of confiscation denounced against them by the one power, but by adopting a course which immediately exposed them to the same risk from the other. The only neutral power which at this period carried on any considerable carrying trade was America ; but it did so to a great extent, and that commerce promised daily to become greater and more profitable to its citizens, from the mutual rage of the belligerents, which threw the only traffic that could be maintained between them into the hands of the only neutral state in existence.

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1811.

94.
Debates on
the repeal of
the Orders in
Council.

* See Appendix, C, Chap. lxiv.

† *Ante*, Chap. l. § 11.

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LXIV.

1811.

95.
Their effect
on America
and other
neutral
powers.
Jan. 17, 1809.
Feb. 6, 1809.

Deeply, therefore, did both the people and government of the United States feel themselves injured by these acts on the part of France and England; and, in despair of bringing either of the powers back to a more reasonable and civilised species of hostility, they had recourse to measures calculated to withdraw from any intercourse with either. A general embargo was first laid on all American shipping within their harbours, which was soon after succeeded by a Non-intercourse Act, which prohibited all intercourse between the United States and either France or England. The particulars of these acts, and the abortive diplomatic efforts which were made to re-establish a good understanding between the two nations, will be given in the sequel of this work.* Suffice it to say, that the Non-intercourse Act continued in force through the whole of 1810 and 1811, and that the cessation of all exports to the United States, which at that time took off British produce and manufactures to the extent of no less than thirteen millions sterling, powerfully contributed both to the extraordinary falling-off in the exports of the latter of these years, and to the general discontent and suffering in the manufacturing districts, which have been already noticed.† Committees were appointed to take evidence on the subject early in 1812—in both houses of parliament; and their members, among whom Mr Brougham, Mr Baring, and Mr Huskisson took the lead, exerted themselves with extraordinary vigour in prosecuting the inquiry. A great number of petitions against the Orders in Council, chiefly from the large manufacturing towns interested in the trade with America, were presented. Early in June the subject came on for discussion in the House of Commons; and the debates which followed were of the utmost importance, as illustrating the real effect, on the national interests, of the extraordinary species of warfare in which the empire was now engaged.¹

On the part of the Opposition, it was argued with uncommon ability by Mr Brougham, Mr Baring, and Mr Ponsonby:—"The question at issue, though one of unexampled importance, is of very little intricacy; the evidence is of immense extent and apparently interminable details;

¹ Ann. Reg.
1810, 253,
260; and
1812, 91, 92.
Bign. ix. 309,
319.

* *Infra*, Chap. xci. § 9.

† *Ante*, Chap. lxi. § 60.

but a few minutes' debate must be sufficient to demonstrate where the only safe or honourable path is to be found. The table of the House has groaned under the mass of petitions presented—the hearts of the members have been harrowed by the details of general suffering which have been established in evidence. Numerous disorders in different parts of the country have arisen out of this general distress ; it has even driven large bodies of men to the absurd expedient of endeavouring to revive an obsolete law of Elizabeth, for magistrates fixing the rate of wages ; while the more enlightened sufferers under the restrictions of the times, have sought some relief in what would prove a most inadequate remedy, the extension of a free trade to India and China. The Potteries have demanded permission to send their porcelain to China ; and the ancient and respectable city of Newcastle has earnestly entreated that it may be allowed to ship *coal* for the stoves and hothouses of Calcutta ! These various projects, some to a certain extent feasible, others utterly visionary and absurd, only prove the magnitude of the evil which is so generally felt, and remind us of the awful accounts of the plague, when, in the vain effort to seek relief, miserable men were seen wildly rushing into the streets, and madly grasping the first passenger they met, to implore his help.

“ The dreadful amount of the present distress is proved by all the witnesses ; it comes upon us in a thousand shapes ; it exhibits the same never-ending yet ever-varying scene of heart-rending suffering. The wants of the poor have been proved to be so pressing, that they have been forced to part with their whole little stock of furniture ; pawn their blankets, their beds, their very clothes off their backs ; and the prodigious mass of moveable articles thus brought at once into the market, has produced a decided depressing effect upon prices even in the metropolis. Great as was the general distress during the scarcity of 1800 and 1801, it is described by a host of witnesses to have been as nothing compared to that which now prevails : for then there was a want only of provisions, but wages were high and employment abundant ; whereas now the want of money meets and aggravates the want of food. The returns of exports and imports

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96.

Argument
against the
Orders in
Council
by Mr
Brougham.

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Distress
which has
been occa-
sioned by
them.

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during the last two years completely account for this extraordinary wo. Nay, they exhibit a decay in national industry, which might have been expected to produce a still more heart-rending and wide-spread suffering. Comparing the whole amount of trade, both exports and imports, (which is the only fair way of reckoning,) there is a falling off, compared with 1809, of thirty-six millions, with 1810 of thirty-eight. In British manufactures alone, the decline from 1809 to 1811 is sixteen millions—including colonial produce, it is no less than twenty-four millions as compared with 1809, and twenty-seven as compared with 1810. The reduction is unparalleled in British annals; it outstrips all the efforts of financiers or treasury-clerks to conceal, and stands forth an imperishable monument of the infatuation on the part of the government which has brought such calamities on the nation.

98.
General
depression of
trade, both
home and
foreign.

“It is in vain to talk of substitutes for the North American trade, the loss of which has been the main cause of these grievous evils. The Brazil market, the South American market, have been tried, and both have terminated in nothing but disappointment. We neither know their wants nor do they require our manufactures. The smuggling trade to the United States through Canada at first afforded some relief; but, since the continuance of our prohibitory system has exasperated the North American population, even this resource has failed us. As a necessary consequence of this total stoppage of all our best foreign markets, the home trade has become depressed in a most remarkable degree. Goods of all sorts, destined for the consumption of foreign states, have been thrown back upon the home market from inability to find any extraneous vent for our manufactures; and then the diminution in the amount of our exports, great as it is, affords an inadequate representation of the real depression of our industry; for it frequently has happened that goods, which had paid duty as exports, and even crossed the Atlantic, have been thrown back upon our own market, and sold at a ruinous loss to all concerned, for domestic consumption. It is in vain, therefore, that, in this unexampled depression of our foreign sales, we turn to our home market for relief; for there the magni-

tude of our external losses has produced a ruinous glut ; and every effort made to find a vent among our own inhabitants but adds to the general distress.

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“ Let it be shown, indeed, that the national honour or security is involved in upholding the Orders in Council, and all these arguments go for nothing ; nay, it becomes the first duty of every patriot, at any hazard, even that of the total ruin of our manufactures, to concur in their maintenance. But has this been shown to be the case ? Nay, is it not evident that their repeal is called for alike by what is due to the national character, and the preservation and stability of our naval power ? It is unnecessary, in discussing this question, to go back to the legality or illegality, the justice or injustice, of the paper blockades of long lines of the enemy’s coast, to which Napoleon constantly refers the origin of this calamitous species of warfare. Admitting that it may be both just and legal to do so, the question is, Is it *expedient* to assert and enforce such rights at a time when it involves us in such calamities ? History proves that, on many occasions, these rights, though never abandoned, have been quietly passed over *sub silentio*, where the assertion of them would have interfered with national interests, or impeded national advantages. This was done at the peace of Utrecht, in the American war, and by express acts of the government in 1793 and 1794. The point now is, whether this is an occasion when, without surrendering our maritime rights, it is expedient for a time to waive their consideration ? Now, what is the commerce which we sacrifice for the vain honour of preserving these rights ? Why, it is no less than the vast North American market—a market now taking off thirteen millions’ worth of our produce, and worth, in the estimation of the most competent witnesses, all foreign markets put together. The returns in that market are as sure, the bad debts as few, as in the former trade with Holland.

99.
The Inexpediency of the continuance of the Orders.

“ The extent, steadiness, and rapid increase of the trade between England and North America is easily accounted for. The inhabitants of the United States are connected with us by origin, language, and habits ; their tastes go along with their inclinations, and they come to us, as a matter of course, for such manufactured articles as they

100.
Origin and value of the American trade lost by the retention of the Orders.

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require. There is not a cabin or loghouse in their vast territory in which you do not meet with British produce; while the rapid increase of their population, which doubles every thirty years, and in which, nevertheless, there is not a single pauper to be found, offers a boundless field for future increase. It is not a figure of speech, but the simple truth, to assert that, circumstanced as the two countries are, there is not an axe falls in the woods of America which does not put in motion some shuttle, or hammer, or wheel in England. It is the miserable, shuffling, doubtful traffic to the north of Europe and the Mediterranean that we prefer to the sure, regular, and increasing North American trade—a trade placed beyond the reach of the enemy's power, and which supports at once all that remains of the liberty of the seas, and gives life and vigour to its main pillar within the realm—the manufactures and commerce of England. Look to the other side of the picture. If you continue the cessation of intercourse with America much longer, the inevitable consequence will be, that the Americans will be driven to the necessity of supplying themselves with manufactures. They have the means of doing so within their own bounds: coal and water-carriage in abundance are to be found in their territory; and the vast fortunes already accumulated in their seaport towns, prove that they are noways deficient in the true commercial spirit. We can have no jealousy of America, whose armies are yet at the plough, or making, since your policy has so willed it, awkward though improving attempts at the loom; whose assembled navies could not lay siege to an English man-of-war. The nation is already deeply embarked in the Spanish war; let us not, then, run the risk of adding another to the already formidable league of our enemies, and reduce ourselves to the necessity of feeding Canada with troops from Portugal, and Portugal with bread from England.”¹ *

¹ Parl. Deb.
xxiii. 486,
522.

Such was the weight of these arguments, and such the strong foundations which they had in the necessities of the times, and the evidence laid before both houses of

* The argument of Lord Brougham, of which the preceding sketch is but the skeleton, is one of the ablest, and, withal, soundest pieces of oratorical reasoning in the English language.

parliament, that government offered very little resistance to them. It was merely urged by Lord Castlereagh and Mr Rose:—"No question, more vital both to the national security and the commercial interests of the country, ever came before parliament: and there can be no doubt that a case of grave distress to the manufacturing interest has been made out by the evidence. Nay, there is reason to believe that, if the North American market is not speedily opened, that suffering will be augmented. Even admitting, however, that the repeal of the Orders in Council would occasion the abrogation of the Non-intercourse Act, still it does by no means follow that the original imposition of these Orders was not called for by necessity, and justified by expedience. Was it to be expected that Great Britain was tamely to have submitted to the iniquitous decrees of France without any retaliation?—without attempting, at least, to inflict upon that state some part of the suffering which it has brought upon this country? As against France, that system has perfectly succeeded; and severely as our commerce has suffered in the struggle, hers has undergone a still more remarkable diminution. From the official accounts published by the French government, it appears that, even with their population of nearly forty millions, the total amount of their manufactures for the home market and exportation was only, in 1810, £54,000,000 sterling, while that of Great Britain and Ireland, with only seventeen millions of souls, was £66,000,000. With the exception of the year 1811, which was one of great depression, arising from temporary causes, the preceding years, when the Orders in Council were in operation, were periods of extraordinary and unprecedented prosperity. The average of our exports to Continental Europe, for three years previous to the issuing of the Orders in Council, was £17,500,000; that for the three years subsequent £23,000,000. Can more decisive proof be desired that the machinations of the French Emperor for our destruction have not only failed in their object, but recoiled upon himself?

"The hostile feelings of the American government have now made the Orders in Council a pretext for breaking off all commercial intercourse with this country;

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1812.

101.

Argument on
the other
side by the
Ministers.

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102.

Unreason-
ableness of
the hostility
of America.

and doubtless that interruption is one great cause of the distress in which the mercantile interests are now involved. But such an interruption could not have been calculated upon; and, in the ordinary course of human events, it would not have occurred. Reason and equitable feeling should have taught the Americans that the Orders in Council were adopted by the English government as a measure of retaliation only; that they were issued subsequent to the Berlin decree, under the pressure of necessity; and if these defensive measures proved, as doubtless they did, injurious in a very high degree to the interests of American commerce, their enmity should have been directed against France, the primary cause of this destructive system of hostility, instead of this country, which merely in its own defence was driven to its adoption. Never was there a country which, when forced to embrace such a system, evinced a more sincere desire to prosecute it in the way least injurious to neutral powers; an instance of which is to be found in the Order of 1809, limiting the blockade to France and the powers under her immediate control. The license system, when properly understood, was no departure from the principles of the Orders in Council; not a fifth of the licenses issued were intended to evade those Orders; four-fifths originated in the enemy's own necessity for relief from the stringent effects of our measures. We did, however, offer to forego all the advantages of the license trade, and revert to the strict measure of 1807, if the government of the United States would repeal the Non-intercourse Act; but they have hitherto shown no disposition to embrace such a proposition.

103.
Pacific dis-
positions of
the British
government.

"The Prince Regent long ago issued a declaration, bearing that, as soon as the Berlin and Milan decrees were repealed, the British government would forthwith withdraw the Orders in Council; and the French cabinet has recently communicated to the American government a resolution apparently consenting to abandon the decrees, if the British Orders were at the same time repealed. That declaration, however, is not sufficiently explicit to enable the English cabinet to act upon the assurance it contains; in particular, it appears to be

virtually abrogated by the sweeping declaration of the Duke of Bassano, that the Berlin and Milan decrees should remain in full force till the maritime assumptions of this country were abandoned. But the British government is fully disposed to receive the olive branch tendered, whether in good or doubtful faith, by the French ruler ; she is willing for a time to suspend the Orders in Council, if the American government will repeal the Non-importation Act. The sincerity of France will thereby be put to the test ; and a breathing-time gained in the midst of this mortal hostility, during which an opportunity would be afforded for a return to a more civilised species of warfare. If the experiment fails, and France persists in her frantic devices, we must return to our retaliatory system ; but if driven to do so, we shall at least have shown every disposition to concede all the just demands of the neutral powers ; and such a return would, it is to be hoped, not lead to any interruption of the amicable intercourse between this country and its Transatlantic offspring, which it is the curse of both countries should ever have been broken.”¹

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1812.

¹ Parl. Deb.
xxiii. 522,
536.

No division ensued upon this debate—Mr Brougham contenting himself with congratulating the country upon the prospect of speedily getting rid of these obnoxious Orders, and the ministry upon the manly course they had adopted regarding them. In truth, it was evident, after the declarations of both the English and French governments, that no real object of contention remained between them ; or at least that both might, in perfect consistency with their national honour and recorded declarations on the subject, recede from the virulent system of hostility which they had adopted. A fortnight after there appeared in the Gazette an Order absolutely and unequivocally revoking the Orders in Council ; but with a declaration that, if the Americans did not, after due notice, revoke their interdictory acts against British commerce, the revocation should become null, and the original Orders revive. This just and manly concession, however, came too late : the democratic party in America had gained entire possession of the public mind : a contest with England, at all hazards, was resolved on :² and, before

104.
Result of
these pro-
ceedings in
parliament.

June 23.

² Ann. Reg.
1812, 93, &c.

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LXIV.

1812.

105.
Reflections
on this sub-
ject.

intelligence of the conciliatory act of the British government had crossed the Atlantic, war was actually declared.

It is evident, on a dispassionate review of this great debate, and the mighty interests which were wound up with it, that the repeal of the Orders in Council, at the period it took place, was a wise, and indeed necessary measure, and that the greater part of Mr Brougham's arguments were well founded. The observation of Mr Canning, in the course of the discussion, was perfectly just, that the Orders in Council were a political, not a commercial measure; and the moment that the evil induced by their continuance exceeded the benefit to be expected from it, the hour for their repeal had arrived. That this period had arrived in 1812, was decisively proved by the great falling off in the commerce of the preceding year. Hopes, indeed, might reasonably have been entertained that the neutral states, seeing how evidently Great Britain stood upon the defensive in the maritime quarrel, would have stood aloof from engaging in it; especially when it was recollected how much more closely their interests were wound up with the maintenance of pacific relations with this country than with any of the continental powers. America, in particular, which traded with Great Britain to the extent of £13,000,000 a-year, and with France not to the extent of £1,000,000 annually, had the most vital interest to preserve pacific relations with the nation with whom so great a portion of its commercial intercourse was conducted. The whole arguments, so forcibly urged by Mr Brougham, as to the vast importance of the American trade to the English manufacturers, applied still more strongly to the impolicy of the United States coming to a rupture with this country, as the proportion which the English trade bore to the sum total of their commerce was much greater than the American bore to the aggregate of ours. But still, when the experiment had been made, and it had been proved by the result that the United States were willing to undergo the loss of such a traffic rather than submit to the English Orders in Council, it became to the last degree impolitic to continue them any longer; for America had infinitely greater

resources whereon to subsist during such a suspension of intercourse than the British empire ; and in the struggle which could starve longest, the manufacturing state, the workshop of the world, like a besieged town, was sure to suffer more than the nations which had drawn their lines of circumvallation around it.

History, in the general case, has to deal only with the dead ; and it is seldom either just or delicate to mingle with the historical gallery of departed greatness the portraits of living genius. There are some instances, however, in which this obvious rule must be infringed upon ; where the impress communicated to the events of an age by one individual has been so powerful, that his character has become historical property even before his active agency has ceased on the theatre of human affairs. Such a character, in a military and political view, is the Duke of Wellington ; and such, in a moral and social one, is Lord Brougham. This very remarkable man is descended from an old and respectable family in Westmoreland, from whom he inherited the ancient castellated mansion from which he afterwards took his title ; and he received the rudiments of his education at the High School of Edinburgh, where his father had for some years resided. Thence, at an early age, he went to the far-famed university of that city, over which the names of Stewart and Playfair at that period threw an unusual splendour, and where a band of gifted spirits was then arising, many of whom have since shone forth with extraordinary lustre on the great stage of the world. Lord Jeffrey, the most celebrated critic of the age in which he lived ; Sir Walter Scott, the greatest of human novelists ; Lord Lansdowne, the not unworthy successor of Pitt in the direction of the British finances ; Mr Horner, whose early and lamented death alone prevented him from rising to the highest place in the councils of his country ; Lord Brougham, who, for good or for evil, has made the schoolmaster's rod superior to the marshal's baton—formed some of the members of a society, in which other men, not less distinguished for energy and talents, were then prominent, whose powers are, it is to be feared, destined to be buried in that common charnel-house of genius—the bar and bench of the

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106.
Early life
of Lord
Brougham.

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country.* He was called to the bar at Edinburgh in 1801, and soon attracted notice by the energy of his character, and the fearlessness and occasional sarcasm of his demeanour; but that capital was too limited a theatre for his growing powers. An able and original work, which he published in 1802, on the colonial policy of Great Britain, early attracted the notice of Mr Pitt; a series of powerful and original papers in the *Edinburgh Review* gave token of the vast influence which he was destined to exercise on public thought; and his removal to Westminster Hall, a few years afterwards, placed him in a situation where legal celebrity was not inconsistent with senatorial advancement.

107.
His character
as a states-
man.

He first obtained entrance into parliament, like all the great men of his day, for a close borough, then in the gift of Lord Carlisle; but his manner was unprepossessing, his voice harsh, and he was at first far from coming up to the exalted anticipations formed by his friends, and subsequently realised, of his future career. The unconquerable perseverance of his disposition, however, overcame all obstacles, and ultimately obtained for him, if not the avowed, at least the real lead on the Whig side in the House of Commons. His practice at the bar, though considerable, and brilliant from the political character of the cases in which he was chiefly engaged, was not first-rate; and both in legal knowledge and forensic judgment he was never deemed equal to his redoubted antagonist on the northern circuit, Sir James Scarlett, now Lord Abinger. But in energy of character, invincible perseverance, versatility of talent, force of expression, and sarcastic power, he was far beyond any barrister or statesman of his day. If his judgment had been equal to his ability, or his discretion to his information, and his vast capacity for exertion had always been directed to objects consistent with each other, and of permanent utility rather than passing interest, he would have left a name in history, as he unquestionably has exercised an in-

* To those who have the felicity of enjoying the acquaintance, or still more the friendship of Lord Corehouse, Lord Moncrieff, Lord Mackenzie, or Lord Cockburn, it is needless to say that nothing but a wider theatre of action, closer proximity to the legislature, or greater leisure for literary pursuits, were necessary to have raised them to the same general eminence which the philosophers, statesmen, and historians of their country, in the last and present age, have attained.

fluence on his own age, second to none in the modern annals of Great Britain.

But inconsistency and want of foresight have always been the bane of his public character. He has signally promoted some great causes, as that of legal reform ; but it is hard to say, upon reviewing the opinions which he has advocated at different periods of his life, whether he has most injured or benefited others which he had still more at heart. He was the steady advocate of Negro freedom, general education, universal toleration, and social amelioration ; yet there is hardly a measure in the end destructive to these great interests, of which he has not, at some period of his career, been the ardent supporter. He has been through life the most resolute enemy of the slave trade, and deserves the lasting thanks of every friend to humanity for his noble efforts to root out that execrable traffic ; but he not less strenuously advocated the abolition of slavery in the British West India Islands in 1834 ; and, by so doing, he has doubled the slave trade in extent, and quadrupled it in atrocity throughout the globe.* He besought the House of Peers on his bended knees to pass the Reform Bill, though the opponents of that measure drew their strongest arguments from his own earlier writings on the subject ; and his whole efforts for the last five years have been directed to demonstrate the unhappy effects of the kind of government which that great change necessarily brought upon the country. He was the warm and consistent supporter of Catholic emancipation ; but his exertions have of late been equally vigorous and effective, in demonstrating the bad consequences which its concession has, hitherto at least, had upon social amelioration in the one island, and the general system of government in the other. He has always been the sincere and powerful supporter of popular instruction ; but by directing it chiefly to intellectual acquisitions, he turned that mighty

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1812.

108.

His failings
and errors.

* "The number of slaves landed in Cuba and Brazil alone," said Mr Buxton, the able and humane advocate of the Negro race, "is now 150,000, being more than double the whole draught on Africa when the slave trade controversy began. Twice as many human beings are now its victims as when Wilberforce and Clarkson began their noble task ; and each individual of this increased number, in addition to the horrors formerly endured, is cribbed up in a smaller space, and stowed in a vessel where accommodation is sacrificed to spoil."—*African Slave Trade*, by T. F. Buxton, London, 1839, p. 172.

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1812.

lever to visionary objects, and placed it beyond the reach or without the interest of the great body of the people ; while, by severing it from religious instruction, he deprived it of the chief blessings which it is fitted to confer upon mankind. He is possessed of extraordinary intensity of vision for present objects and immediate interests ; but he is far from being equally clear-sighted as to ultimate consequences, or the permanent welfare of humanity.

109.
His character
as an orator.

His style of speaking presents the most extraordinary contrast to the abstract ideas which he entertains, and has powerfully expressed, as to the perfection of eloquence. No man feels more strongly the masculine simplicity of ancient oratory, or has better described the injurious effect sometimes even of a single epithet on the majesty of thought ; while none more constantly weakens the force of his own intense and vivid conceptions by variety and redundancy of expression. He objected to the addition which the imagination of Tasso made to the sublime image of Dante ; * and yet he seldom fails to overwhelm the reader by exaggerations of the same idea under different forms, till the original impression is well-nigh obliterated. No one more happily or forcibly strikes the iron upon the head in the outset ; but none, by a repetition of slant blows, more frequently mars its force, or alters its direction. His long practice of addressing juries, or assemblies of ordinary capacity, has proved injurious to his efforts to reach the highest style of eloquence. Every idea, if at all felicitous, is, in his hand, torn to rags. He forgets that those who read his speeches will not be equally obtuse with those who heard them, " que

* " Al guisà di Leon quando si posa."

To which Tasso added the line,

" Girando gli occhi, et non movendo il passo."

Critics may differ as to whether the beautiful image in the last line does or does not detract from the majestic simplicity of the first ; but Lord Brougham unequivocally condemns it as destroying the grandeur of the Florentine bard. See Lord Brougham's Address to the Students of Glasgow. *Lord Rector's Addresses*, Glasgow, 1830—a most interesting collection, as well from the celebrity of the statesmen and philosophers called to that eminent station, as from the progressive change in the character of thought which their successive compositions evince, from the philosophic silence on religion, characteristic of the days of Hume, with which it commences, to the devotional glow descriptive of those of Chalmers, with which it concludes, and which only wants the admirable address of Sir James Graham in 1838, to be one of the most instructive monuments which the literature of Europe during and after the French Revolution has produced, of the vast effect of that great event in bringing men back, by necessity and suffering, to the best and noblest sentiments of their nature.

les gens habiles s'entendent à demi-mot." On this account, his fame with posterity—that is, the reading and thinking few—will be by no means equal to that which he has enjoyed among his contemporaries—that is, the hearing and unthinking many.

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Irony and sarcasm constitute his strongest arm in oratorical contests; and there he is unrivalled even by Pitt or Canning. His speeches to juries were often models of vehement and powerful declamation; but his judgment as a counsel was far from being equal to his talent as a barrister, and in more than one instance he has supplied what was wanting on the side of the prosecution by his imprudence in calling witnesses for the defence.* His information is immense, and his powers of application unbounded, but his knowledge on subjects of philosophy is rather extensive than accurate—of law, rather varied than profound. He has always been distinguished by the warmest filial and domestic attachments; and a purer ray of glory than even that which is reflected from his senatorial achievements is to be found in the steadiness with which, though often erring in judgment, he has ever supported the interests of freedom and humanity; and the indefatigable ardour which has enabled him, amidst a multiplicity of professional and official duties which would have overwhelmed any other man, to devote his great powers to the illustration of the wisdom of God from the works of nature.

110.
Merits of his
style of
speaking.

His merits and defects as a writer are of a totally different kind from those which characterise him as a statesman and an orator, but share in the strange contradictions and anomalies of his mind. The work on

* It is well known that the character of the chief witnesses for the prosecution, in the case of Queen Caroline, was so bad that no reliance could be placed on their testimony; and on this fact Lord Brougham has never failed to descant in the most unmeasured terms, whenever he could by possibility introduce the subject. He has not so frequently told, however, what is equally well known, that it was the evidence of the witnesses whom he himself put into the box, Lieutenants Flyn and Hownam, whose character was above suspicion, that in the end left no doubt of the Queen's guilt in the mind of any person capable of weighing evidence.—See *Parliamentary Debates*, 1820, iii. 459-543, *New Series*. Yet this unhappy princess was possessed of some amiable, and many charming qualities; and in better hands might, in Mr Canning's words, have been, "the life, and grace, and ornament of society." "She is," says a personal and disinterested acquaintance, Sir Walter Scott, "a charming princess, and lives in an enchanted palace; and I cannot help thinking her prince must labour under some malignant spell to deny himself her society."—See *Lockhart's Life of Scott*, p. 99.

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III.
His merits as
a writer.

which his reputation in future times will chiefly rest is his "Lives of Statesmen and Men of Letters during the Reign of George III.;" and it is certainly a very amusing, and, in some respects, an able production. Yet are its merits and demerits such as would never have been expected from the vehement parliamentary orator or acute legal pleader. Apart from some flagrant instances of party prejudice in the political Lives, the work is distinguished, especially in the literary part, by great candour, considerable judgment, and an amiable spirit of justice and equanimity. He has collected a great many amusing anecdotes, and brought within a comparatively narrow compass much political and literary gossip. On the other hand, there is little eloquence in the work, few marks of original thought or genius, and hardly any of that enthusiasm for the great and the good which it is the chief object of biography to awaken, and which the lives he was narrating were so well fitted to call forth. He never seems to think for himself, but adopts the prevailing opinions of his party in politics or economics for the day, as axioms concerning which no doubt whatever can be entertained. Thus he gravely asserts that the *discovery* that "rent arises from the bringing of inferior lands into cultivation, is perhaps the most considerable step made in political economy since the 'Wealth of Nations' was published;"* forgetting that, if that be true, no rent could ever have existed any where if the world had been, like the plain of Lombardy, a vast plain of equal fertility in every part—even although, as in the Delta of Egypt, the riches of the soil yielded a return seventy-fold to the labours of the cultivator. He is desirous of obtaining the fame of universal knowledge, and inserts in popular biographies algebraic calculations from D'Alembert: but it would be well to recollect that such reputation is now impossible, and that he who aims at compassing every thing, has in general mastered nothing.

The prosecution of the war in the Peninsula, and the chances of continuing it with success, was the last of the momentous subjects which occupied the British parliament during the sessions of 1810 and 1811; and none

* *Lives of Statesmen*, vol. iii. p. 142.

affords more interesting matter for retrospect. On the part of the Opposition, it was strenuously argued by Mr Ponsonby, Earl Grey, and Lord Grenville:—"It is a painful task to refer to predictions formerly made and despised, now unfortunately realised. How disagreeable soever, nevertheless, it may be, from a reference to past disasters, to anticipate future calamities, it has now become a bounden duty to do so; and this the more, that it is not a mere barren censure of past errors to which such a retrospect leads, but a solemn injunction to rescue the country in future from similar calamities. Is parliament to sit year after year passive spectators of wasteful expenditure, and the useless effusion of the best blood of the country, in hopeless, calamitous, and disgraceful efforts? What return is due to the gallant army which has made such noble sacrifices? Is it not a sacred duty imposed upon government to see that not one drop more of blood is wasted in a cause where no thinking man can say, that by any possibility such dreadful sacrifices are made with any prospect of advantage to the country? Is it agreeable or consistent with the character of men of common intelligence to submit to be fed from day to day with the tale of unprofitable successes—of imaginary advantages to be gained by our army for ourselves or our allies? Is there any one who in his conscience believes, that even the sacrifice of the whole British army would secure the defence of Portugal? If such a man there be, it may with confidence be affirmed, not only that he is unfit to be intrusted with the government of the country, but even incapable of transacting public business in any deliberative assembly.

"In a financial point of view, the cause of the Peninsula is utterly hopeless. Can any man who looks at our immense exertions for the last seventeen years, assert that the annual expenditure of from three to four millions in its defence has not been absolutely lost to Spain, fruitless to Portugal, and of no advantage whatever to this country? In fact, so utterly hopeless is the cause, that nothing short of a divine miracle can render it effectual for its proposed object. But there are higher considerations than those of mere finance, which call upon us instantly to abandon this sanguinary and unprofitable

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LXIV.

1810.

112.

Argument of
the Opposi-
tion against
the Spanish
war.

113.

The alleged
impossibility
of continuing
its expendi-
ture.

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struggle. The utter impossibility of defending Portugal with the British army, aided by the Portuguese levies, is so apparent, that it is a mockery of common understanding to argue on the subject. In former instances, when Portugal was attacked, the forces of the enemy were divided; but now they are wholly unoccupied in the north, and may be directed with fatal and unerring effect against that country. Is there any man bold enough to assert that the British army in Portugal, aided by the native force maintained by our subsidies, will be sufficient to resist such an attack? What reliance can be placed on this subsidiary force, unpractised in the operations of war, and wholly ignorant of military discipline, except what they may pick up from their British officers? That Portugal can be defended by such a force, is a thing absolutely impossible: if our troops do not take refuge in their ships, before six months is over not a British soldier will remain in the Peninsula except as a prisoner of war.

114.
Degraded
condition of
the Portu-
guese.

“Has any thing been done to rescue the Portuguese people from the miserable state of thralldom in which they have been kept by their government, nobles, and priests, and to develop that ardent popular spirit from which alone history teaches us a vigorous national resistance is to be expected? Here has been a glorious opportunity for raising the Portuguese nation from that wretchedness and degraded condition to which centuries of mental ignorance and civil oppression have reduced them. Here was a task worthy of the greatest statesmen, suited to a wise and liberal policy—to an enlarged and generous spirit—to the free institutions of a free government. Nothing has been done with this view; the Portuguese are in as degraded a state as when the French eagles first approached the towers of Lisbon. Was it possible to expect a national spirit to arise when nothing was done to elicit it? And without such a spirit among the people, was it not, if possible, more hopeless than from other views to expect that any successful resistance could be made? The Portuguese levies, upon whom so much reliance is placed, might in time, perhaps, hereafter become good soldiers, and be capable of acting with regular troops. But when the corruption, weakness, and imbecility of the government are taken into view, every

one must be convinced of the total impossibility of obtaining any native force capable of active co-operation with the British army.

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“What assistance have we ever obtained from the Spanish armies, notwithstanding the high-sounding promises with which they have deluded the English troops into their territories? To expect any thing better from the Portuguese, is to put all experience at defiance. They may be useful as light troops, but cannot act with regular soldiers. Portugal, instead of being defensible from its mountains, is perhaps the most indefensible country in Europe. The experience, not merely of the last seventeen years, but of the last few months, have amply demonstrated the total inefficacy of mountain ranges as a barrier against the vast forces and bold tactics of modern war. What defence has the Sierra Morena proved against the invasion of Soult? It is not by any such defences that Portugal is to be saved from the fate which has overtaken all the military monarchies of Europe. Disguise it as you will, the real question at issue is, whether the army at this moment in Portugal is to be sacrificed, as those under Sir John Moore and Lord Chatham have been; and unless the House intervenes, from a just sense of its own duty not less than of regard to the national honour, disasters yet greater than either of these, and probably irreparable, await the British empire.

115.
Worthless-
ness of the
native troops,
Spanish and
Portuguese
alike.

“Our victories are perpetually held up as monuments of our eternal glory, and Maida, Corunna, Vimiera, and Talavera are everlastingly referred to as the theme of undying congratulation. But what have any of these boasted triumphs done for the people of the country where they were won, or for the general issue of the war? Maida handed over the Neapolitans to the tender mercies of an irritated and cruel enemy; Corunna sacrificed Moore only to deliver over Galicia to the Gallic armies; Vimiera was immediately followed by the disgraceful convention of Cintra; and Talavera was at best but an exhibition of rash confidence and victorious temerity. Honours have been conferred upon Sir Arthur Wellesley, for whom and for his country it would have been much more honourable if he had never changed his name. His conduct in Spain seemed the result of infatuation. After

116.
Alleged fruit-
lessness of all
the victories
won.

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¹ Parl. Deb.
xv. 511, 535,
87, 90.

117.
Answer by
Lords Wel-
lesley and
Liverpool.

defeating Soult, he recrossed the Douro to form a junction with Cuesta, and when that was effected he remained unaccountably inactive, till Soult was so far recovered as to be able to paralyse all his efforts, by descending into his rear after the battle of Talavera; and when forced to retreat, he retired to an unhealthy province at an unhealthy season, where he remained some months till his army had lost a third of its amount from malaria fever. If these are the consequences of your triumphs, what may be anticipated from your defeats?"¹

To these arguments it was replied by Lord Wellesley, Lord Liverpool, and Mr Perceval:—"The arrangements now proposed proceed on the same principles with the whole efforts hitherto made and sanctioned by large majorities in both houses of parliament. What has occurred to induce us to swerve from this course, or depart from those principles which have invariably influenced our alliance with the Peninsular kingdoms to the present hour? The royal message proposes to take thirty thousand Portuguese into British pay. Was not such a course strenuously recommended by Mr Fox and Mr Windham, when Portugal was endangered, when they were in power in 1806? Why are we to be now called upon to depart from this policy, adopted by the greatest statesmen of all parties—and to abandon Portugal to her fate at the very time when she is making the greatest efforts to avert subjugation? What advantage is to be gained from thus casting over our counsels the hue of despair? Are we to tell our allies that the hour of their fate has arrived; that all attempts to assist them are in vain, and that they must bow the neck and submit to the yoke of a merciless invader? That would indeed be to strew the conqueror's path with flowers; to prepare the way for his triumphal march to the throne of the two kingdoms. Is it for this that so much treasure has been expended, so much blood has been shed? The spirit of the Spanish people is still excellent, their resources are far from exhausted; those of Portugal are untouched; our gallant army has never yet sustained a defeat; and is this the time to retire with disgrace from the contest? Will he who never risks a defeat ever gain a victory?

"Let us not, therefore, come to any resolution which can

countenance Portugal in relaxing her exertions, or justify Spain in considering her condition hopeless. And yet what other result could be anticipated if we were now to withdraw from the Peninsula before Portugal is so much as invaded, or the shock of war has even come upon us? The circumstances under which the war has commenced in the Peninsula, form a glorious contrast to those that pervade all the other nations of the Continent. Spain was the first country that exhibited the example of a general rising of its population against the invasion and usurpation of the French ruler. In other countries he has been opposed by the armies alone, and, when they were overwhelmed, the states were conquered. But in Spain the resistance has proceeded from the whole people; and the hopes founded on their efforts are not to be dashed to the ground by the disasters of two or three campaigns. The country presents, beyond any other, physical advantages for such a stubborn system of warfare, from the vast desert or rocky tracts and numerous mountain ridges with which it abounds; while the history and character of the people afford room for well-grounded hopes, that they will not in such a contest belie the character which they acquired in the Moorish wars. No point can be imagined so favourable for the *place-d'armes* of the British force as the Tagus, lying as it does on the flank of the enemy's communications, and in such a position as to afford a central point, equally adapted for secure defence or for offensive operations.

"If the hope of defending Portugal is really of that desperate character which is represented, let a motion be brought forward at once to abandon that country to its fate. Will the gentlemen opposite support such a motion, and thereby sacrifice at once all the blood and treasure which have already been expended in the Peninsula? Will they bring invasion home at once to our own doors? Have we gained nothing by the contest in its bloody fields? Is it nothing to have maintained a doubtful struggle with the conqueror of continental Europe for so long a period, to have staid the tide of conquest heretofore so fearfully rapid, and to be able to say that still, in the third year of the war, our standards wave in undiminished security over the towers of Lisbon? We have

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118.
Remarkable
features of
the Penin-
sular contest.119.
Gains already
accomplished
in it.

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gained that which is at once more honourable and more precious than empty laurels, the affection and confidence of the people both in Portugal and Spain: affection so great, that there is not a want of the British soldiers in the former country that is not instantly and gratuitously supplied; confidence so unbounded, that the government of the latter have offered to put their fleet at the disposal of the British admiral. War has its chances and its reverses as well as its glories; we cannot gain the latter if we shun the former: but surely never did nation win a brighter garland than England has done during the Peninsular contest, and never was nation bound by stronger ties to support a people who have, with such heroic resolution, borne during three years the whole weight of Napoleon's military power.¹

¹ Parl. Deb.
xvi. 508, 535,
and 94, 105.

120.
And heroism
displayed by
the Spaniards.

"It is ungenerous to represent the whole people of the Peninsula as having achieved nothing worthy of memory. Have the defenders of Saragossa and Gerona no title to the admiration of posterity? In what other country have three hundred thousand Frenchmen been constantly engaged in active warfare for three years without having yet effected its subjugation? True, the Spaniards have been often defeated; true, their chief provinces have been overrun; but after every defeat fresh armies have sprung up, and all history cannot produce an example of a more heroic resistance than this 'degraded' people have opposed to the invader. Nor has our co-operation been in time past unavailing, nor will it prove in time to come fruitless. Sir John Moore's advance arrested the conquest of the south of Spain, and postponed for more than a year the irruption into the Andalusian provinces. Lord Wellington's attack on Soult expelled the French from Portugal, and restored Galicia and Asturias, with the fleet at the Ferrol, to the patriot arms; his advance towards Madrid has drawn all the disposable forces of the enemy into the plains of La Mancha, and at once protected Portugal and given a breathing time to Spain. The British army, headed by Wellington, and supported by forty thousand Portuguese, directed by British officers, is not yet expelled from the Peninsula; and it will require no ordinary force of the enemy to dislodge such a body from their strongholds near Lisbon."²

² Parl. Deb.
xvi. 536, and
105.

Upon this debate parliament supported ministers in their resolution to continue the war : in the Lords by a majority of 30—the numbers being 124 to 94 ; and in the Commons by a majority of 96—the numbers being 263 to 167.*

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When the Eastern sage was desired by a victorious Sultan to give him an inscription for a ring, which should, in a few words, convey the advice best calculated to moderate the triumph of prosperous, and diminish the depression of adverse fortune, he wrote the line—“ *And this, too, shall pass away.*” Perhaps it is impossible to find words more universally descriptive of human affairs ; or of that unceasing change from evil to good, and from good to evil, which, alike in private life and the concerns of nations, appears to be the destiny of all sublunary things. It is from inattention to this perpetual revolution, not of fortune, but of moral causes controlling it, that the greatest political calamities, and most of the greatest political errors, in every age, have been owing. The Opposition, in the earlier part of Wellington’s career, were subject to their full share of this general weakness. They thought that things would continue permanently as they then were ; that Napoleon’s greatness was to be as durable as it had been irresistible ; and that the experienced inability of any European power to combat his land forces, had, for the lifetime of the whole existing generation at least, established his empire beyond the possibility of overthrow. Judging from the past experience of that conqueror, there can be no doubt that these views were founded in reason ; and yet the world was on the eve of the campaign of Salamanca and the Moscow retreat.

121.

Reflections on this debate, and the conduct of the Opposition on the subject.

The error of the Opposition consisted in their insensibility to the change which was supervening in human affairs, and to the new principles of vigour on the one side, and weakness on the other, which were rising into action, from the effects of the very triumphs and reverses which appeared to have indelibly fixed the destiny of human affairs. The perception of such a change, when going forward, is the highest effort of political wisdom ;

122.

Cause of the errors of the Whigs on this point.

* In justice to the Opposition, it must be observed, that the greater part of the debates here summed up took place immediately before the Torres Vedras campaign.

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it is the power of discerning it which, in every important crisis, distinguishes the great from the second-rate statesman, the heroic from the temporising ruler of mankind. Alone of all his compeers, Wellington saw and acted on this conviction. The government at home, gifted with less penetration, or fewer opportunities of observation, were far from sharing in his confidence as to the result, though they had the magnanimity to persevere in their course, even when they had little hopes of its success. The glorious triumphs to which it led, and the enduring reward which their constancy obtained, adds another to the many instances which history affords, where heroism of conduct has supplied the want of intellectual acuteness, and where the ancient maxim has been found good, that "true wisdom cometh from the heart."

123.
Their long
insensibility
to the glory
of England.

The prolonged, obstinate, and most formidable resistance which the Whig party made to the prosecution of the Spanish war, in its earlier stages, was an error of judgment, which only showed that they were not gifted with the highest political quality—that of seeing futurity through the shadows of present events. But when the tide had obviously turned—when success had in a durable way crowned the British arms, and the waves of Gallic ambition had permanently receded from the rocks of Torres Vedras—their conduct was of a more reprehensible cast; it became the fit subject of moral censure. With slow and unwilling steps they receded from their favourite position, as to the impossibility of defending Portugal; they still heaped abuse upon ministers for their conduct in the contest, although it was chiefly blamable, in time past, from having been too much framed on their advice; it was a cold and reluctant assent which they yielded even to the merits of Wellington himself. This insensibility to national glory, when it interfered with party ambition—this jealousy of individual greatness, when it obscured party renown—proved fatal to their hopes of accession to power during the lifetime of the generation which had grown up during manhood in the Revolutionary war. Doubtless it is the highest effort of patriotic virtue to exult at successes which are to confirm an adverse party in power—doubtless no small share of magnanimity is

required to concede merit to an opponent who is withering the hopes of individual elevation. But nations, from men acting on the great theatre of the world, have a right to expect such disinterestedness; it is the wisest course in the end even for themselves; and experience has proved that in every age really generous hearts are capable of such conduct. When Wellington lay at Elvas, in May 1811, he received a letter from Mr Whitbread, retracting, in the handsomest manner, his former strictures, and ascribing them, probably with justice, to the imperfect information on which his judgment had been founded. The English general expressed himself highly gratified, as well he might, with this generous conduct;* but it does not appear that so noble an example was followed by any other of the Whig leaders; and on this occasion unhappily, as on many others, the exception proves the rule.

Having determined to prosecute the war in the Peninsula with undiminished vigour, parliament granted to ministers ample supplies in the year 1811 for its prosecution. No less than £19,540,000 was voted for the navy, and £23,869,000 for the army; besides £4,555,000 for the ordnance, and £2,700,000 for the support of the Portuguese forces. The permanent taxes amounted to £38,232,000, and the war ones yielded above £25,000,000; and the loan was £16,636,000, including £4,500,000 for the service of Ireland. The total Ways and Means raised on account of Great Britain were £80,600,000, and £10,309,000 on account of Ireland—in all £90,909,000. This income, immense as it was, fell short of the expenditure of the United Kingdom, which that year reached £92,194,000. The army numbered 220,000 soldiers in the regular forces, and 81,000 militia,¹ besides 340,000 local

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124.
Budget, and
naval and
military
forces of
1811.

1 Finance
Accounts,
Parl. Deb.
xxii. 1, 34,
App. and
Ann. Reg.
1812, 398,
408. App. to
Chron.
James, v.
Table iii.
App. No. 19.

* "I was most highly gratified by your letter of the 29th April, received last night, and I beg to return you my thanks for the mode in which you have taken the trouble to inform me of the favourable change of your opinion respecting affairs in this country. I acknowledge that I was much concerned to find that persons for whom I entertained the highest respect, and whose opinions were likely to have great weight in England and throughout Europe, had delivered opinions, erroneous as I thought, respecting things in this country; and I prized their judgments so highly, that being certain of the error of the opinion which they delivered, I was induced to ascribe their conduct to the excess of the spirit of party. I am highly gratified by the approbation of yourself and others, and it gives me still more pleasure to be convinced that such men could not be unjust towards an officer in the service of the country abroad."—WELLINGTON to SAMUEL WHITBREAD, Esq., 23d May 1811—GURWOOD, vii. 585.

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militia; and the navy exhibited 107 ships of the line in commission, besides 119 frigates. The total vessels of war belonging to the United Kingdom were 1019, of which no less than 240 were of the line.*

125.
Budget, and
naval and
military
forces for
1812.

The supplies voted for the succeeding year, 1812, were still greater, and kept pace with the increasing magnitude of the contest when the campaign of Salamanca had commenced, and the deliverance of the Peninsula in good earnest was being attempted. The net produce of the permanent taxes in that year was no less than £40,000,000, of the war ones £26,000,000, in all £66,000,000; and £29,268,000 was raised by loan, including £4,500,000 for the service of Ireland, and £2,500,000 for that of the East India Company, guaranteed by government. The public expenditure was on a proportionate scale: the sum expended for the navy was £20,500,000, that for the army £25,000,000, besides £4,252,000 for the ordnance; the loans to Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Sicily, and Russia, amounted to £5,315,000, while the interest of the national debt amounted to £23,124,000; and still no less than £13,482,000 was applied to the sinking fund. The navy, during this year, consisted of 978 ships of all sizes, of which 236 were of the line: and 102 line-of-battle ships, and 131 frigates were in commission. The army numbered 227,000 regular soldiers under its banners, besides 86,000 regular, and 335,000 local militia. It seemed as if, as the contest continued and the scale on which it was conducted was enlarged, the resources of the empire, so far from declining, widely expanded.†

126.
Second
decennial
census of the
people.

The second decennial census of the population took place in the close of 1811, and was reported to parliament in January 1812. It exhibited an increase of 1,600,000 upon the former number in 1801—being at the rate of about 13½ per cent annually over the whole empire. So great an augmentation, considering the protracted and bloody hostilities in which the nation had so long been engaged in every quarter of the globe, and the heavy drain on the male population both for foreign and colonial service, justly excited the surprise and called forth the congratulation of parliament and the nation; and the important fact was then for the first time elicited, that war,

1 Parl. Deb.
xvi. 478.

* See Appendix, D, Chap. lxiv.

† See Appendix, E, Chap. lxiv.

though generally considered as the scourge of the species, when carried on according to the maxims of civilised life, often communicates an impulse rather than a check to the increase of mankind; and that the quickened circulation and augmented demand for labour which it occasions, more than compensates the destruction of human life by which it is accompanied.*

Two very important events which occurred at this period, deserve to be mentioned before the domestic transactions of Great Britain in the years 1811 and 1812 are disposed of, and the reader is embarked in the mighty concluding events of the war. The first of these was the rupture of the negotiations which had been for some time pending for the exchange of prisoners of war between England and France: the second, the capture of the *last* colonial settlement of the French Emperor, and the establishment of the British flag in undisputed sovereignty both in the eastern and western hemispheres. Great embarrassment had, for a very long period, been experienced by the English government from the immense accumulation of French prisoners in the British islands, and the difficulty of finding any secure places for the custody of so large a number of able-bodied men. Fortresses, with the exception of Portsmouth and Plymouth, there were none in England; and the only other regular fortification in the northern part of the island, Fort George, near Inverness in Scotland, had not accommodation for above fifteen hundred men. Now there were, in 1810, not less than fifty thousand French prisoners in Great Britain; and after erecting, at an enormous expense, several vast structures for their habitation, particularly one at Dartmoor in the south of England, and two in Scotland, the latter each capable of containing six or seven thousand men, the government were under the necessity of confining great numbers in the hulks and guard-ships.

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1810.

127.
Negotiation
for an ex-
change of
prisoners
with France.

	1801.	1811.
* Population of England,	8,331,434	9,499,400
" " Wales,	541,546	607,380
" " Scotland,	1,599,068	1,804,864
" Army and Navy,	470,598	640,500
Totals,	10,942,646	12,552,144

—*Parliamentary Debates*, xxi. 226.

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128.

Napoleon's
complaints on
this subject.

The detention of soldiers in such a situation, was made the subject of loud and frequent complaint by the French Emperor, who said in the *Moniteur*, "that by a refinement of cruelty, the English government sent the French soldiers on board the hulks, and the sailors into *prisons in the interior of Scotland*."* With his usual unfeeling disposition, however, to those whose services could no longer be made available, he not only resisted every proposal for an exchange of prisoners on any thing approaching to reasonable principles, but never remitted one farthing for their maintenance. He thus left the whole helpless multitude to starve, or be a burden on the British government, which, on the contrary, regularly remitted the whole cost of the support of the English captives in France to the imperial authorities. Notwithstanding Napoleon's neglect, however, the prisoners were surprisingly healthy, there being only 321 in hospital out of 45,939 in confinement, while out of 2,710 who enjoyed their liberty on parole, no less than 165 were on the sick list.¹

¹ Parl. Deb.
xx. 634.
Hard. xi. 105.

129.
Proposals for
their ex-
change by
Great
Britain.

At length, in April 1810, the British ministry sent Mr Mackenzie on a special errand to endeavour to effect an exchange with the French government. He was well received by the imperial cabinet, and the negotiation opened under apparently favourable auspices; but it soon appeared that the demands of Napoleon were so exorbitant as to render all the efforts of the negotiators abortive. He insisted that the transfer should be general; that is, that all the prisons, French, English, Spaniards, Portuguese, and Italians, should be exchanged, man for man, and rank for rank, on the same footing as the principal power under whose banners they were respectively ranged. The effect of this would have been, that Napoleon would have obtained restitution of fifty

* The great depot of French prisoners in Scotland, which Napoleon held out as so deplorable a place of detention, was a noble edifice, erected at a cost of nearly £100,000, in a beautiful and salubrious situation near Perth, on the Tay, which, after being for twenty-five years unoccupied, was in 1839 converted by the government, on account of its numerous advantages, into a great central jail for criminals. It contained 7,000 prisoners; and so healthy was the situation, and substantial was the fare and lodging they had received, that of this great number only from five to six died annually; a smaller mortality than that among any equal body of men in any rank in Europe going about their usual avocations. That in England was equally healthy. At Dartmoor depot in 1812, out of 20,000 prisoners there were only 300 sick, or 1 in 66; a proportion much above the average health of persons at large.—*Personal Knowledge.* Parl. Deb. xx. 694.

thousand French soldiers and sailors in exchange for *ten thousand* English prisoners, being all whom he had in his custody ; the balance of forty thousand being made up of a rabble of Spanish and Portuguese levies, who were of little value, and who had no title to be placed in the same rank with the regular soldiers of either of the principal nations. The British government insisted that any given number of British should first be exchanged for an equal number of French ; and that then the transfer, man for man, and rank for rank, between the remaining French or their allies against the Spanish and Portuguese should commence.* Neither party would recede from the position which they had respectively taken, and the result was, that the negotiations broke off, and Mr Mackenzie returned to this country in the beginning of November.¹

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1811.

No other testimony than that of Napoleon himself is requisite to demonstrate the unreasonable nature of the pretension on his part, which led to this melancholy result. "Supposing," said he, in speaking of the comparative merit of the troops composing the French and allied armies previous to the battle of Waterloo, "that one English soldier was to be placed against one French, you would require two Prussian, or Dutch, or soldiers of the Confederation, to counterbalance one Frenchman."²

¹ Bign. ix.
145. Parl.
Deb. xx. 623,
631.

130.
The failure of
the negotia-
tion was
owing to
Napoleon.

² 9th Book of
Nap. Mem.
61.

Now, if two Prussian or German regular soldiers were required to counterbalance one Englishman or Frenchman, unquestionably four Spanish or Portuguese undisciplined recruits would have been barely sufficient for a similar counterpoise. Nothing, therefore, could have been more unreasonable than the demand on the part of the French government, which ultimately proved fatal to the negotiation. Yet so much was Napoleon blinded by egotistical feelings on this subject, that he made the conduct of the English cabinet in the transaction a bitter subject of complaint to the latest hour of his life ; and actually had the address to persuade his troops that their long detention in English prisons was the fault of the British government, when it was entirely his own ; and when he had left them to starve there without the least relief from him.³ In fact this would have been their fate,

³ Bign. ix.
145, 146.
Parl. Deb.
xx. 623, 631.
Ann. Reg.
1811, 76.
Las Cases,
vii. 39, 40.

* See Appendix, F, Chap. lxiv.

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131.
Description
and vast
importance of
Java.

but for the humane interposition of the very government which in this transaction he was loading with obloquy.*

The other memorable event of the period, apart from the never-ending maze of European politics, was the successful expedition undertaken against JAVA in the close of 1811, and the capture of the *last colonial possession* of the French empire. This noble island, in itself a kingdom, is no less than six hundred and forty miles long, and from eighty to a hundred and forty broad, and contains above two millions of inhabitants. Its surface, agreeably diversified by hill and dale, and rising in the interior into lofty mountains, presents situations adapted for almost every variety of vegetable production, whether of the temperate or torrid zones; while its admirable situation in the centre of the Indian Archipelago, midway between India and China, pointed it out as the emporium destined by nature for almost the whole of the lucrative Eastern commerce. So rich is its soil, so varied its capabilities, that it now produces sixty thousand tons of sugar, and five million pounds of pepper for exportation annually; besides furnishing rice and other grains for the support of its numerous inhabitants, and yielding a lucrative commerce of cinnamon, nutmeg, and other spices, to its European masters. It was early acquired, and had been for centuries in the hands of the Dutch, who, carrying to the East the habits and partialities of their own swampy territory, built their capital, Batavia, in a low unhealthy situation, and intersected it with canals, which rendered it doubly dangerous. Such, however, are the advantages of its situation, and of its noble harbour, esteemed the finest in the Indian Archipelago, that, notwithstanding

* Napoleon's account of these transactions was as follows:—"The English had infinitely more French than I had English prisoners. I knew well that the moment they had got back their own they would have discovered some pretext for carrying the exchange no farther, and my poor French would have remained for ever in the hulks. I admitted, therefore, that I had much fewer English than they had French prisoners; but then I had a great number of Spanish and Portuguese, and by taking them into account I had a mass of prisoners, in all, considerably greater than theirs. I offered, therefore, to exchange the whole against the whole. This proposition at first disconcerted them, but *at length they agreed to it*. But I had my eye on every thing. I saw clearly that if they began by exchanging an Englishman against a Frenchman, as soon as they got back their own they would have brought forward something to stop the exchange. I insisted, therefore, that three thousand Frenchmen should at once be exchanged against one thousand English and two thousand Portuguese and Spaniards. They refused this, and so the negotiation broke off."—LAS CASES, vii. 39, 40.

its pestilential atmosphere, it contains nearly two hundred thousand inhabitants. But the cool breezes on the heights in its vicinity offer many salubrious situations which the eager European thirst for gold has hitherto unaccountably neglected; while the lofty hills and pastoral valleys in the interior present numerous spots for human abode, where the burning rays of the sun are tempered by the fresh-blowing mountain air, and the glowing skies of the east shed their radiance over the rich foliage and green slopes of European scenery.¹

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¹ Malte Brun,
iii. 445, 453.
Valentyn.
Java, 64.
Indes Orient.
v. 65.

This splendid island was the last possession beyond the seas which remained to the French empire, of which it had become a part upon the incorporation of Holland in 1810. Its reduction had long been an object of ambition to the British government; and in 1802 the preparations for the expedition were so far advanced, that the command was offered to Sir Arthur Wellesley, then governor of Mysore, by whom it was refused, as interfering with the important duties of that responsible situation. The Marhatta war, which soon after broke out, with its immediate consequence, the contest with Holkar, involved the Indian government in such a maze of hostility, and so seriously embarrassed their finances, that it was not till 1811 that the project could be seriously revived. It was then, however, set about in good earnest; and, to give additional *eclat* to the expedition, Lord Minto, the governor-general of India, resolved to accompany it in person. In the close of 1810, the Isle of France had surrendered to a combined naval and military expedition from Bombay, and the enemy was completely rooted out of his possessions in the Indian Ocean. Those in the Eastern Archipelago were the next object of attack. The islands of Amboyna and Banda having been reduced by the British arms, a powerful expedition against Java was fitted out at Madras in March, consisting of four British and five native regiments of infantry, with a regiment of horse and a considerable train of artillery; in all, ten thousand five hundred men, under the command of the gallant Sir Samuel Auchmuty. The expedition effected a landing at the village of Chillingching, about twelve miles to the east of Batavia, in the beginning of August.² The principal force of the enemy,

132
Expedition
against the
island.

Dec. 6, 1810.

Feb. 1811.
April 1811.
Aug. 4.
² Sir S. Auchmuty's Despatch.
Aug. 31, 1811.
Ann. Reg. 1812, 225.
App. to Chron.; and James's Naval History, vi. 26, 27.

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1811.

which consisted of about ten thousand men, was collected in the intrenched camp of FORT CORNELIUS—a position strongly fortified by art and nature, and defended by numerous redoubts, surrounded by stout palisades, and mounting two hundred and eighty pieces of cannon.

133.
Storming of
the outworks
of Fort
Cornelius.

Aug. 8.

The chief force of the French and Dutch was in this formidable position, under their commander General Jansens ; but a considerable detachment, about three thousand strong, occupied a more advanced post, also strengthened by field-works, two miles in front of the main body. Neither of these positions, however, commanded the road to the capital, which was accordingly occupied without opposition a few days after the landing ; and from thence the troops marched against the enemy's advanced work, and drove them from it with great spirit, under shelter of the cannon of Fort Cornelius ; the grenadier company of the 78th, as in almost every Eastern field of fame, heading the attack. When the victorious troops, however, came in sight of that stronghold, they were checked by the fire from its outworks, and the boldest paused at the sight of the difficulties which they had to encounter. The enemy, strongly intrenched, occupied a position between the great river Jacatra and the Sloken, an artificial watercourse, neither of which was fordable. The front of this position, thus secured on either flank from attack, was covered by a deep ditch strongly palisadoed, within which were seven large redoubts, all planted with a formidable array of heavy artillery, garrisoned by a body of regular troops, much superior in number to the attacking force. Batteries were speedily raised opposite to these fortifications, which, though armed with guns inferior to those of the enemy both in number and calibre, shortly did great execution from the superior rapidity and precision of their fire. The season, however, was too far advanced, and the heat too violent, to admit of regular approaches ; and, notwithstanding the strength of the intrenched camp, the English general resolved on an assault, which was fixed for daybreak on the 26th.¹

¹ Sir S. Auchmuty's
Desp. Ann.
Reg. 1812,
226. App. to
Chron.
James, vii.
32, 33.

At midnight on the 25th, the assaulting columns moved from the trenches under the command of a most gallant

and experienced officer, Colonel Gillespie. The right, under his own immediate direction and that of Colonel Gibbs, was directed against the enemy's redoubts beyond the Sloken, and had orders, if they succeeded in carrying them, to endeavour to force their way across the bridge which united that outwork to the main intrenchments. The left, under Colonel M'Leod, was to follow a path on the bank of the Jacatra, and commence an attack on that side when the firing was heard on the other flank ; while the centre, under General Wetherall, was to endeavour, in the general confusion, to force its way across the ditch in front. Notwithstanding the early hour and secrecy of the attack, the enemy were on the alert, and under arms at all points ; but the devoted gallantry of the British troops, aided by the unflinching steadiness of the sepoys, overcame every obstacle. All the attacks proved successful. Colonel Gillespie, after a long detour through an intricate country, came to the redoubt on the right, stormed it in an instant, notwithstanding a tremendous fire of grape and musketry ; and, passing the bridge with the fugitives, also carried the redoubt next in order, though defended in the most obstinate manner by General Jansens in person. The British force then divided into two, one column under Gillespie himself, the other under Colonel Gibbs, supported by Colonel Wood, at the head of the heroic 78th, which, though long opposed, now burst in with loud shouts in the front of the lines, and successively carried the works on either hand ; while Colonel M'Leod, on the extreme left, also forced his way into the redoubt which rested on the Jacatra, and gloriously fell in the moment of victory.¹

With equal judgment and valour, Gillespie lost not a moment in leading on the victorious troops to the attack of the enemy's park of artillery in the rear, which, with all the troops that defended it, fell into the hands of the conqueror. The victory was complete, though the severe loss sustained by the British, amounting to 872 killed and wounded, showed how obstinately it had been contested. The slaughter of the enemy within the works was very great ; above a thousand were buried on the field, besides multitudes cut down in the pursuit, and five thousand

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134.

Storming of
the lines of
Fort Cor-
nelius itself.

¹ Sir S.
Auchmuty's
Desp. Ann.
Reg. 1812,
226, 230.
App. to
Chron.
James, vi. 24.

135.

Results of the
victory, and
surrender of
all Java.
Sept. 25.

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prisoners taken. No less than four hundred and thirty pieces of cannon were found in the intrenched camp, of which two hundred and eighty were mounted on the batteries and redoubts: the total pieces taken then, and in the citadel of Batavia and the outworks previously stormed, amounted to the enormous number of 264 brass and 504 iron guns and mortars, besides ammunition and military stores to an incalculable amount. This splendid exploit was soon after followed by the capitulation of the remaining troops who had escaped with General Jansens from the rout at Fort Cornelius, who, notwithstanding all his efforts, found it impracticable to prolong his defence. The whole of this noble island thus fell under the dominion of the British, (which, it must always be regretted, was relinquished by a misplaced generosity at a future time;) and Lord Minto said with great, but not unfounded pride, in his despatches to the government on the occasion, that "now the French flag was nowhere to be seen flying from Cape Comorin to Cape Horn." ¹

¹ Sir S. Auchmuty's Desp. Ann Reg. 1812, 169. App. to Chron. 226, 236. James, vi. 24.

136. Reflections on the total destruction of the French colonial empire.

Such was the termination of the maritime war between England and Napoleon; thus ~~was~~ extinguished THE LAST REMNANT of the colonial empire of France. There is something solemn and apparently providential in the simultaneous march of these great powers to universal dominion on their respective elements, and in the establishment of the colonial empire of Great Britain on a scale of grandeur which embraced the whole earth in its arms. No such result could have been anticipated at the commencement of the contest; still less could it have been hoped for amidst the multiplied disasters with which its progress was attended. The maritime forces of England and France were very nearly matched at the opening of the war; united to those of Spain, the latter were superior. Gibraltar was only revictualled during the American war by the nautical skill of Lord Howe; and Plymouth beheld, for the first time in English history, its harbour blockaded by the triumphant squadrons of France and Spain. The colonial empire of France in 1792, though not equal, was a fair rival to that of England. In the West Indies she possessed St Domingo, an

island then yielding colonial produce equal to that of all the British West India islands put together at this time ; * in the East, her flag or that of her allies waved over the Cape of Good Hope, the Isle of Bourbon, the Isle of France, Java, and the Malaccas—midway stations apparently set down for the transit of the commerce of the East to the European shores ; while on the continent of Hindostan, her influence almost equalled that of England herself, and on the banks of the Jumna a force was organised, under French officers, superior to any which British energy could bring to bear against it.†

What was it, then, which subverted this vast and growing colonial empire ; which gave to the arms of England, amidst continual European disasters, a succession of maritime triumphs unparalleled in the days of Marlborough or Chatham ; and led to the total destruction of the Asiatic and American possessions of France, at the very time when Napoleon's forces had acquired universal dominion on the continent of Europe ? Evidently the French Revolution on the one hand, and the constancy of England on the other ; those mighty agents which at once dried up the maritime resources of the one country, and quadrupled the naval power of the other ; which poured forth a host of ardent democrats over the plains of Europe, and sent forth the British fleets conquering and to conquer on the waves of the sea ; which nursed in England the heroic spirit of conservative freedom, and let loose in France the irresistible energy of democratic ambition.

Even if the contest had terminated at this point, the fortunes of the British empire, though overshadowed at

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1811.

137.
What produced this wonderful result.

* It yielded £18,000,000 worth of colonial produce—that of the whole of the British islands in 1833 was only £22,000,000 ; and in 1839, in consequence of the emancipation of the slaves, it did not amount to £17,000,000. The total produce of the British West India islands—

Sugar, hhds.		Rum, puncheons.	
in 1833 was	271,700	.	61,700
in 1839	179,800	.	43,400

Falling off, 91,900 18,300

—*Colonial Magazine*, No. III. Appendix ; *Parliamentary Return*, 4th June 1833 ; and *PORTER'S Parliamentary Tables*, I. 64 ; *Ante*, Chap. xxxvi. § 7.

† They had thirty-eight thousand infantry and cavalry, and two hundred and seventy guns, all commanded by French officers, and trained in the European method.—*Ante*, Chap. xlix. § 43.

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138.

Superiority of
colonial to
European
conquest.

the moment by the grandeur of Napoleon's continental victories, must now appear to the reflecting eye to have been in the ascendant. England, by wresting from her rival all her colonial settlements, had made herself master of the fountains of the human race. In vain France recounted the fields of European fame, and pointed to the world filled with her renown, the Continent subjugated by her arms. It was the seats of ancient civilisation, the abode of departed greatness, which were thus subdued. Great Britain had cast her anchor in the waters of the emerging globe; her flag waved on the infant seats of civilisation; her seed was spreading over the future abodes of mankind. The conquest of the world which had been, however superior in present lustre, could never equal in durable effect the settlement of the world which was to be. There was to be found the ark which bore the fortunes of humanity; there the progenitors of the Greece, and the Rome, and the Europe yet to come; there the tongue which was to spread the glories of English genius and the pride of English descent as far as the waters of the ocean extend. But the contest was not to terminate here.* The rival powers, thus nursed to greatness on their respective elements, thus alike irresistible on the land and the sea, were now to come into fierce and final collision. England was to launch her legions against France, and contend with her ancient rival on her own element for the palm of European ascendancy; the desperate struggle in Russia was to bring to a decisive issue the contest for the mastery of the ancient world. We are on the eve of greater changes than have yet been traced on the pages of this eventful history—fiercer passions are to be brought into collision than those which had yet stirred mankind in the strife; sacrifices greater recounted, glories brighter recorded, than had yet shed lustre on the human race.

139.

Importance
of the preced-
ing domestic
detail of
British trans-
actions.

Long, and to some uninteresting, as the preceding detail of the domestic transactions of Great Britain from 1810 to 1812 may appear, it will not to the reflecting reader be deemed misplaced even in the annals of European story. Amidst the multiplied scenes of carnage, the ceaseless streams of blood, which charac-

terise the era of Napoleon, it is consolatory to linger on one spot of pacific disquisition. To the eye wearied with the constant mastery of nations by physical strength, it is refreshing to turn to one scene where mind still asserted its inherent superiority, and in moral causes was yet to be found the source of the power which was ultimately to rule mankind. Independent of the vast intrinsic importance of the questions which then agitated the British mind, and their obvious bearing upon the social interests which now are at stake in all the commercial communities of the globe, their influence on the contest which was then pending was immediate and decisive. The crisis of the war truly occurred in the British islands at this period. If any of the great questions then in dependence had been arranged in a different manner from that in which they actually were decided by the English parliament, the issue of the war—the fate of the world, would have been changed.

The accession of the Opposition to power when the restrictions upon the Prince Regent expired in 1812; the adoption by the House of Commons of the recommendations of the Bullion Committee; the abandonment by government of the Peninsular contest, in pursuance of the strenuous arguments of their parliamentary antagonists, would, any one of them, have speedily terminated the contest in favour of the French Emperor, crushed the rising spirit of Russia, extinguished the germ of European freedom, and affected, by the destruction of English maritime power, the whole destiny of the human race. Not less than on the fields of Leipsic and Waterloo, did the fortunes of mankind hang suspended in the balance during the debates on those momentous subjects. Interests more vital, consequences more momentous, than any that were contemplated by their authors, hung upon the lips of the orators, and quivered on the decisions of the statesmen. It is this which gives the debates of the British senate at this period their enduring interest; it is this which has rendered the chapel of St Stephen's the forum of the human race. The military glory of England may be outshone by the exploits of future states; her literary renown may be overshadowed by the greatness of subsequent genius: but the moral interest of her

140.
Fatal effects
which would
have followed
the adoption
of the Whig
policy at this
time.

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social contests, mirrored in the debates of parliament, will never be surpassed; and to the end of time the speeches of her illustrious statesmen will be referred to as the faithful image of those antagonist powers which alternately obtain the mastery in human affairs, and on the due equipoise of which the present happiness, as well as the future advancement, of the species is dependent.

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CHAPTER LXV.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CORTES—WAR IN THE EAST OF SPAIN.
JANUARY 1810—FEBRUARY 1812.

So intimately blended together are the links in the great chain of human affairs, and so mysterious the bond which unites in this sublunary state the co-existing principles of good and evil, that it is impossible to find any period when these antagonist powers have not been at work, and when unseen causes have not been preparing a vital change in the fate of nations or the fortunes of mankind. In the darkest moments of the French Revolution, the seeds of revived religion and renewed loyalty were widely scattered throughout the nations. In the most depressing period of the conquests of Napoleon, the principles of resistance were acquiring increased energy, and suffering was preparing in silence the renovation of the world. The period we are now considering was no exception to the general law. At the moment when the constancy of England and the heroism of Russia were preparing the emancipation of the Continent from French oppression, and the delusions of democracy were disappearing in northern Europe before the experience of its effects, or about to yield to the aroused indignation of mankind, a new principle of evil was springing up in the last asylum of Continental independence, destined to revive in another quarter the worn-out flames, and perpetuate a frightful civil war for a quarter of a century in the Spanish peninsula. And while Great Britain was securely laying the foundations of a colonial empire which was to embrace the earth in its grasp and civilise mankind by its wisdom, the

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1.
Singular
mixture of
good and evil
in human
affairs.

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1810.

vast Indian possessions of the Spanish monarchy were breaking off from the parent state, and the frantic passions of ill-regulated freedom were preparing desolation and ruin for the boundless realms of South America.

2.
Agency by
which this is
brought
about.

That there is no rose without its thorn, and no thorn without its rose, is a maxim in private life which the concurring voice of all ages has proclaimed, and every man's experience who has seen much of human affairs must probably have confirmed. The law of nature seems to be of universal application and unceasing activity ; for we can distinctly trace its agency in every transaction, whether individual or political, in the page of history or in common life around us, and perpetually witness its effects alike in the trials of individuals and the discipline of nations.* In the very events which at one period are most the objects of our desire, whether as communities or private men, we can subsequently trace the unobserved causes of our distresses ; in the evils which we at the time regarded as altogether overwhelming, we afterwards discern with thankfulness the secret springs of our blessings or improvement. Inexperience or infidelity will discover in this mysterious system only the blind operation of chance, or the antagonist agency of equal and opposing supreme powers. Reason equally with revelation tells us, that such is necessarily the condition of a world composed of free agents in a state of moral probation. If the good principles alone were brought into action, it would be heaven—if the bad, hell ; and the mixed condition of mankind, and the perpetual agency of the causes of evil amidst good, and of good amidst evil, unavoidably arise from that inherent tendency to wickedness as well as aids to virtue, which we have inherited from our First Parents, or derived through Revelation. The pride of intellect, the visions of phil-

* ——" Know I am sent
To show thee what shall come in future days
To thee and to thy offspring ; good with bad
Expect to hear ; supernal grace contending
With sinfulness of men ; thereby to learn
True patience, and to temper joy with fear
And pious sorrow ; equally inured
By moderation either state to bear,
Prosperous or adverse."

Paradise Lost, xi. 355.

anthropy, will to the end of time chafe against this simple truth, and contend, on the principle of unlimited perfectibility, for a relaxation of every restraint, except what itself imposes, on human action. But it is the only principle which will ever afford any solution of the otherwise inexplicable maze of human affairs. Experience, the great test of truth, is perpetually demonstrating its universal application. Suffering, wide-spread and inevitable, never fails to chastise any attempt to elude its obligations; and the more widely one generation deviates from it in their actions, the more closely will the next adhere to it in their opinions.

Never was the truth of these principles more clearly evinced, than in the contrast between the immediate and ultimate results which followed the arrival of the French before Cadiz in 1810. Europe beheld with admiration the able and energetic march of the Duke of Albuquerque, which, outstripping the celerity of the French legions, preserved the last bulwark of Spanish independence for the arms of freedom.* The subsequent assembly of the Cortes within its impregnable ramparts, promised to give that unity to the Spanish operations of which the want had hitherto so grievously been experienced in them, at the same time that it presented a national authority with which other powers might treat, in their negotiations for the furtherance of the common cause; while the English people, variously affected by philanthropic ardour or mercantile interest, beheld with undisguised satisfaction the progressive emancipation of the South American colonies, and fondly anticipated, some a renovation of the Southern Hemisphere, others a boundless extension of the field for British speculation, in the regenerated states of the New World. Yet from these very events, so fortunate at the moment in their immediate effects, so apparently auspicious in their remote consequences, have arisen results to the last degree pernicious, both to the Spanish peninsula and the British empire.

The establishment of the Cortes within the walls of Cadiz brought it under the direct influence of the democratic mob of a great and corrupted city; the revolu-

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3.
Ultimate
effects of the
blockade of
Cadiz.

* *Ante*, Chap. lxiii. § 46.

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4.
Vast effects it
has produced
in the world.

tionary passions revived with the immediate subjection of supreme power to their control ; and the constitution of 1812 bequeathed to the Spanish peninsula the fatal gift of a system of government, alike impracticable for the country at large, and seducing to the urban constituencies for whose interest it was intended. The severance of the Spanish colonies from the parent state, to which the mercantile jealousy of the Cadiz government speedily gave rise, spread the revolutionary passions through a people unfit, alike from their habits, intelligence, and descent, for the blessings of freedom : the bright dawn of their independence was speedily overcast with clouds ; and the now wasted and distracted South American states, the successive prey of a race of tyrants too numerous for history to record, and of a succession of revolutions too frequent for mankind to recollect, remain an enduring monument of the utter impracticability of applying to a Roman Catholic population and Celtic tribes, those institutions which are overspreading the world with the Protestant faith and the Anglo-Saxon race.

5.
Evils accru-
ing to Eng-
land from the
democracy of
Cadiz.

Nor has England suffered less in this audacious attempt to war against the character of men and the laws of nature. Consequences, to the last degree disastrous, have accrued both to her people and her constitution from the independence of the Spanish colonies, in promoting which she took so prominent a share. Her wealth, guided by deluded, or the prey of unprincipled hands, has been absorbed to an unparalleled extent in South American speculations. The loss of fifty millions, lent to their faithless insolvent republics, or reckless and improvident companies, brought on the great commercial crisis of 1825 ; the entire abandonment of the South American mines, from the bankruptcy of those who worked them, and the general destruction of population and industry in the country, altered by a half the annual supply of the precious metals to form money over the globe ; and, joined to the suppression of small notes in Great Britain by the bill of 1826, added a third to the whole debt, public and private, of the British empire ; and, from the general distress and suffering thence arising, has sprung that wide-spread discontent and general unanimity in favour of some organic change, which in its ultimate

effects overturned the English constitution. Out of the walls of Cadiz, in 1810 and 1811, has issued the cloud which now overspreads the world; the fierce passions which have since drenched the Peninsula with blood; the guilty ambition which has halved the numbers of the South American population, and almost reduced them to barbarism; the restless energy which overthrew the constitutional freedom of the Restoration in France; the turbulent spirit which overturned the tempered aristocracy and government of property in England.

Little dreaming of the momentous consequences dependent on their actions, the Spanish authorities in the Isle of Leon, animated with unconquerable resolution, and a spirit of resistance which seemed to augment with the straits to which they were reduced, proceeded to the formation of a Cortes for the regulation of the constitution. It has been already mentioned that the Central Junta, after their expulsion from Seville in January 1810, had passed a decree, vesting the interim government in a regency of six persons, which was proclaimed in Cadiz on the 31st, and laying down the principles by which the convocation of the Cortes was to be regulated.* These were of the utmost importance, and materially influenced the character of the subsequent proceedings. By the first, the ancient constitution of that body was altered, and, instead of assembling as of old in three chambers, they were to meet in two; the one called the Popular, the other the Dignified Assembly. A still more important enactment was passed, relative to the mode of supplying the members of such provinces of the monarchy as, from their distance from the place of assembly, or from being in the possession of the enemy, could not meet for the purpose of choosing representatives. It was provided, with a view to the choice of deputies to represent those provinces of America or Asia which could not, by reason of their distance, be summoned in time, that the regency should appoint an electoral junta, composed of six persons, natives of those regions, who should choose, by a double ballot, twenty-six deputies out of a list of persons, also natives of the same districts, who happened to be at that time in Spain,

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6.
Regulations
laid down for
the convoca-
tion of the
Cortes.
Jan. 1810.

Jan. 29.

* *Ante*, Chap. lxiii. § 45.

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1810.

that list being made up by a committee of the Cortes. In like manner, to fill up the representation of the provinces in the occupation of the enemy, another electoral junta was appointed by the regency, composed of six other individuals, natives of those districts, who were to choose, by a double ballot, four members for each of such provinces out of a list furnished by the Cortes. The provinces, in regard to which representatives were to be chosen in this manner, comprised the whole of Spain, with the exception of Galicia, Asturias, and part of Catalonia; so that the great majority of the Cortes was necessarily composed of persons elected in the city of Cadiz. The powers of the assembly thus elected were sufficiently extensive, for they embraced a general remodelling of the whole laws and constitutions of the monarchy.¹

¹ Proclamation of Junta, Jan. 29, 1810. Tor. iii. 464. Pièces Just.

7.
Enactments regarding the passing of laws by the Cortes.

With regard to the legislative business of the assembly, it was provided that all propositions for changes in the laws should be submitted, in the first instance, to the two chambers, and, if passed by them, be sent up to the regency, in place of the crown, for approval; but the regency might in the first instance refuse their consent, and remit the bill to the chambers for reconsideration. If, however, it was then approved by two-thirds of both houses, it was to return to the regency, who were bound to adhibit their signature to it within the space of three days, on the expiry of which it became law, with, *or without* the royal sanction.²

² Ibid. Tor. iii. 464. Pièces Just.

8.
Character of the population in Cadiz, and the municipality within its walls.

Strongly as these fundamental provisions savoured of popular restrictions on the royal authority, their effect became doubly powerful from the circumstances of the city, and character of the population, in which the sittings of the Cortes took place. The Junta, immediately before the resignation of their authority, passed two resolutions, by the first of which the liberty of the press was established in the most ample manner during the whole sitting of the Cortes, and in the place of its deliberations; while, by the second, none of their own members were declared eligible for the approaching national convention. After their resignation, and before the assembly of the Cortes, the regency of six, to whom the supreme authority had been confided, insensibly sank into insignificance; and the

Jan. 29.

Municipal Junta of Cadiz, elected by the whole householders of the city, rapidly rose to the highest influence and consideration. It may easily be conceived what was the character of a municipality elected in a great commercial city, by universal household suffrage, during a time of mingled terror, enthusiasm, and patriotic fervour. Its population of a hundred and fifty thousand souls, increased at that period by nearly a hundred thousand strangers, who had taken refuge within its impregnable walls from all parts of the Peninsula,—naturally democratic in its tendency, was then in the most violent state of effervescence; the Central Junta, under whose government so many disasters had been experienced, had fallen into universal obloquy; and the ardent, inexperienced multitude, who had lost or suffered so much in the course of the contest, not unnaturally concluded that all these disorders were to be ascribed to the ignorance or incapacity of former rulers, and that the only chance of salvation for the country was to be found in the substitution of the vigour of popular for the imbecility of aristocratic direction.¹

The great majority of the Municipal Junta, accordingly, were, from the very first, strongly tinctured with republican sentiments. Their incessant object was to augment their own power, and depress that of every other authority in the state; and nothing but the presence of the large military force of the allied nations within the fortress, amounting to twenty-seven thousand men, prevented them from breaking out into all the excesses of the French Revolution. Though restrained in this way from such atrocities, however, the revolutionary action soon became so violent as to gain the entire civil direction of the government clubs, in which democratic sentiments of the most violent kind, uttered amidst thunders of applause, were heard in all quarters of the city. The public press shared in the general excitement. The most licentious and profligate works of the French metropolis were translated, sold at a low price, and greedily devoured by the populace. One of the most popular journals indicated the state of public feeling by taking the title of the "Spanish Robespierre;" and when the few members of the Junta, who really were elected by the provinces, arrived at Cadiz in the beginning of March,² the torrent

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1810.

¹ Hard. xl.
145, 146.
South. iv.
284, 286.
Tor. iii. 184,
187.

9.
Extremely
democratic
spirit which
prevailed in
that city.

² Hard. xl.
169, 172.
Tor. iii. 186,
187. Southey,
iv. 285, 286.

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1810.

10.
Persecution
of the mem-
bers of the
Central
Junta.
Feb. 1810.

had become irresistible, and they found themselves instantly swept away by the flood of democratic fury.

The principal members of the late Central Junta which had governed Spain, if not with credit or success, at least with constancy and courage during fourteen months of almost continued disaster, were speedily exposed to persecution and violence from this infuriated party. Count Tilly and Don Lorenzo Calvo were arrested and thrown into prison on a charge of treason to the Spanish cause, on grounds so clearly futile and unfounded, that public opinion, excited as it was, could not support the measure, and the latter was acquitted and liberated after a long confinement by the Cortes. All the other members of the Junta were proceeded against in the same vague manner, and searched or imprisoned without the vestige of ground except the one which they shared with all Spain, of having been unfortunate. The clamour of the multitude, prevailing alike over the dictates of justice and the principles of reason, insisted on their immediate prosecution with the utmost rigour of the law. Even the venerable name and great services of Jovellanos could not protect his person from contumely, or avert an iniquitous decree which banished him without trial to his own province, there to be placed under the surveillance of the police. Such was the grief which he felt at this undeserved severity, that it embittered his few remaining days, and brought him speedily to the grave. Tilly died in prison without a trial. Calvo, one of the heroes of Saragossa, who had been thrust into a dungeon without a bed in it, was brought to trial after the Cortes met, and acquitted. So violent, however, was the public effervescence, that the British ambassador felt relieved by the imprisonment of these unfortunate functionaries, lest the populace should anticipate the march of legal proceedings, and take the wreaking of vengeance into their own hands.¹

¹ Tor. iii.
190, 192.
South. iv.
293, and 298.

11.
Circum-
stances which
preceded and
attended the
assembling of
the Cortes.

Having got possession of the government of the country, the regency and municipality of Cadiz were in no hurry to accelerate the assembling of the Cortes, by which a rival and possibly paramount legislative power might be established in the very seat of their authority. By the decree of the 29th January, that assembly stood convoked for the 1st March, "if the national defence would permit;"

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1810.

but these words were sufficiently vague to allow the continued blockade of Cadiz to be accepted as a reason against convoking the Cortes, and furnished a decent pretext to the regency for delaying their meeting. The promised time, accordingly, passed over without any thing being done. Loud clamours in consequence arose, both among the inhabitants of Cadiz and various deputies from the juntas of different provinces, who had taken refuge within its walls; and the ferment at length became so violent, that the government deemed it necessary to yield to the torrent, and issued a decree for the convocation of the Cortes. Great difficulties, however, were experienced in determining the principles on which the members were to be summoned, and still more in filling up the returns of deputies from the districts occupied by the enemy. Another question of still more importance was, whether the Cortes should sit in *one*, or in two chambers, as the decree of the late junta had provided. At length, after a vehement discussion, it was determined that the ancient mode of election should be completely changed, and that the assembly should sit in a SINGLE CHAMBER. From that moment the ruin of the cause of freedom in Spain was irrevocable.¹

June 13.

¹ Tor. iii.
342, 347.
South. v. 75.

The mode of election formerly had been various in different provinces, but all the principle of the representation of, and election by, the three *orders* had been more or less clearly established: a principle, indeed, which was universal in the middle ages in all the European communities, and may be considered as the distinctive mark of European civilisation. It was followed and given effect to by the division of the Cortes into the three chambers, or *estamento* of the nobles, the clergy, and the commons, each of which had a negative on any legislative measure. The members for the boroughs were in general chosen by their magistrates, not their inhabitants; but there was no fixed rule, and ancient custom regulated the franchise and its mode of exercise. It was now determined, however, by the regency, in opposition to the strenuous advice of the illustrious Jovellanos, that the principle of the elections should not be, as of old, the representation of ranks or of *orders*, but of *individuals*; and as a consequence of

12.
The election
is based on
numbers, not
interests.

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1810.

this, that the elective franchise should be given to every Spaniard domiciled in the country, of the age of twenty-five years. One deputy was to be returned for every fifty thousand souls in the rural districts; one by every borough which formerly returned a member; and one by every provincial junta, in consideration of their services during the war. The whole of the deputies, thus elected by universal suffrage, were to sit in one chamber: the nobles and the church had no separate representatives. In this assembly, therefore, the Dukes of Medina Cœli or Del Infantado, or the Archbishop of Toledo, had no more influence than a simple mechanic. How long would the institutions of England, with its calm judgment, old habits, and Anglo-Saxon descent, withstand the dissolving influence of a *single* constituent assembly vested with unbounded legislative power, elected and conducting business in such a manner? Not one week. What, then, was to be expected from the fervent spirit and inexperienced ambition of Andalusia, suddenly invested with supreme uncontrolled power, under the burning sun, and within the beleaguered walls of Cadiz ?¹

¹ Tor. iii. 342,
351. South.
v. 75, 85.

13.
Election of
the supple-
mentary
members of
Cortes.
Sept. 8.

Perilous as were the elements of legislation thus thrown together in the national assembly of Spain, the danger was materially augmented by the steps taken to fill up the supplementary members for the provinces beyond seas, and those in the occupation of the enemy. By an edict published in the beginning of September, it was provided that the number chosen for the provinces beyond seas should be twenty-eight, and for the conquered provinces forty; and that both the electors and the elected should be taken *from the persons belonging to those districts who had then taken refuge in Cadiz*. Thus one part of the Cortes was composed of deputies chosen by universal suffrage in the cities and provinces of Spain yet unoccupied by the enemy; and the remainder made up of refugees, selected by the same mode of choice from the promiscuous crowd who encumbered the streets of that great commercial emporium. No restrictions of any sort were imposed on the choice of any of the members; it was only necessary that the deputy should be above twenty-five, born in the province for which he was chosen, and unconvicted of any

crime. It is remarkable that a proceeding so perfectly novel and revolutionary as this formation of the Cortes, to which the entire remodelling of the Spanish constitution was intrusted, not only met with no opposition at Cadiz, but was cordially supported by men of all parties, even the most exalted functionaries, and the staunchest supporters of the ancient order of things: another proof among the many which history affords, that revolutions are diseases of the national mind, which, however they may be strengthened by the discontents or suffering of the lower orders, really originate in the infatuation of the higher; and that the class who invariably put the fatal weapon into the hand of the masses, are those who are ultimately to be swept away by their fury.¹

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¹ Martignac sur l'Espagne, 94, 95. Tor. iii. 349, 356. South. v. 78, 85. Hard. xi. 170, 172.

The deluded patriots who had thus conceded irrevocable power to a faction totally unfit to wield it, were not long of perceiving the consequences to which their blind trust in republican virtue in a corrupted society was likely to lead. As the day for the elections and filling up the supplementary seats drew nigh, the public effervescence hourly increased. Clubs, juntas, assemblies, resounded on all sides; the press multiplied in extent and increased in violence; and that general anxiety was felt which, by a strange instinct in the moral equally as the physical world, precedes the heaving of the earthquake. It was soon found that the torrent was irresistible. Rank, experience, age, learning, consideration, were almost every where disregarded in the candidates; and republican zeal, loud professions, vehement declamation, impassioned eloquence, constituted the only passports to public favour. Before the elections, three-fourths of which were conducted within the walls of Cadiz, were half over, it had become evident that the democratic party had acquired a decisive ascendancy. Then, and not till then, a large proportion of those who had supported or acquiesced in these frantic innovations became sensible of their error, tried to pause in their career, and soon began to declaim loudly against the Cortes of their own creation. But it was too late: popular passion was not only excited, but unchained; and the march of revolution had become inevitable,² because aristocratic

14.
Election of the Cortes itself.

² Tor. iii. 355, 357. Martignac, 94, 96.

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1810.

15.
Opening and
early proceed-
ings of the
Cortes.
Sept. 24.

infatuation had installed democratic ambition in supreme power.

On the 24th of September the Cortes thus constituted commenced its sittings; that was the first day of the SPANISH REVOLUTION. They began, like the French National Assembly in 1789, with religious ceremonies and the forms of the monarchy. High mass was celebrated in their presence by the Archbishop Bourbon, and an oath binding them to maintain the Roman Catholic faith, the integrity of the monarchy, the rights of Ferdinand VII., and the national institutions, so far as not requiring amendment, was administered to and taken by all the members. From thence they adjourned to the hall prepared for their reception in the principal theatre in the city; and then it soon appeared that the influence to which they were exposed would speedily prove fatal alike to the religion, the monarchy, and the constitution of the country. The saloon was spacious and elegant; but the immense crowds of both sexes who occupied, as spectators, the upper tier of boxes, and the vehement applause with which all the most violent republican sentiments were received, soon demonstrated that the Cortes were to be subjected to that external seduction and intimidation, which a popular assembly is rarely, if ever, able to resist. From the outset, accordingly, the character of their proceedings was pronounced; it at once appeared that a new era in the domestic history of the Peninsula had arisen. The preceding movement, although violent and sanguinary, had, with a few local exceptions, been of a different character—it was national and anti-Gallican. This was social and democratic. Though still engaged in the French war, and resisting with unconquerable firmness alike the open hostility and insidious propositions of the French ruler, the principal object of the Cortes after this was not foreign but domestic; it was not external independence, but internal reform on which their hearts were set; and, trusting to the impregnable walls of Cadiz for their immediate security, and to the English arms for their ultimate deliverance, they concentrated all their efforts upon the dissemination of republican institutions, and the establishment of republican ascendancy in their country.¹ In this attempt they were

¹ Tor. III.
356, 363.
Mart. 97, 98.

from the very first completely triumphant, and incalculable results in both hemispheres have flowed from their success.

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1810.

The very first resolution with which the Cortes commenced was decisive of the character of the assembly, and destructive of the institutions of a mixed monarchy. It bore, "That the deputies who compose the Congress, and represent the Spanish nation, declare themselves legitimately constituted in the general and extraordinary Cortes, *in which is placed the national sovereignty.*" The members of the regency were required to swear obedience "to the sovereignty of the nation, represented by the Cortes, and to obey its decrees." These, and many similar resolutions were carried unanimously amidst the loud applause of the members and galleries; the debates were prolonged till midnight amidst a delirium of unanimity; extempore speeches, unknown hitherto in southern Europe, fraught with eloquence, bespoke at once the ability and fervour of the speakers; and the regency, with the exception of the Bishop of Orense, who had courage enough to resist the innovation, abandoned by all, and confounded by the violence of the torrent, took the oath at four in the following morning, and thereby virtually converted the monarchy into a "democracy."¹

16.
Proclaim the
sovereignty
of the people.

¹ Tor. iii.
361, 375.
South. vi. 84,
87.

Having gained this great triumph, the Cortes were not long of following up their advantage. On the very next day, it was declared that they should be addressed by the title of Majesty, and that all the authorities, civil, ecclesiastical, and military, should take the oath in the same terms as the members of the regency had done. Alarmed at the responsibility thus imposed upon them by so excited an assembly, the regency anxiously requested an explanation of the meaning of the Cortes in this particular; but all that they could obtain was a vague declaration, "that their duties embraced the security and defence of the country, and that the responsibility which was exacted from the members of the regency excluded only the absolute inviolability of the person of the King." The Bishop of Orense, with patriotic fervour, endeavoured to stem the torrent: he openly combated the oath exacted from the regency, and denounced in no measured terms the usurpation of supreme power of which the Cortes had been guilty. No

17.
Fresh as-
sumptions of
supreme
power by the
Cortes.

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one, however, had courage sufficient to imitate the example of his firmness; and after several months spent in fruitless resistance, he was forced to submit, and withdrew to his diocese in Galicia, to shun, if he could not prevent, the approaching calamities. The regents being wholly destitute of real authority, and subject to the responsibility of office without its powers, shortly resigned their situations; and they were immediately banished from the island of Leon, and ordered to reside each in distant places. New functionaries were appointed, more obsequious to the will of the popular assembly; but none of them had the courage to refuse the oath of sovereignty to that body, and it was universally felt that they were merely puppets in the hands of their imperious masters.¹

¹ Tor. iii.
377, 391.
South. v. 87,
94.

18.
Decree on the
liberty of the
press.

The most momentous topic which can occupy the attention of a popular government—the liberty of the press—early attracted the notice of the Cortes. In the debates which ensued on this interesting subject, the different parties assumed a regular form and consistency; and it soon appeared how little the ardent spirits who had obtained the command in its deliberations, were inclined to pause in their career from the most awful example which history afforded of the perils attending it. One member openly expressed a wish for a “Christian Robespierre;” another declared that “*un pequeno*” Robespierre was what was required—a person who might establish a system of terror somewhat more moderate than had been used in France. “Caustic,” it was said, “is what is called for: matters must be carried on with energy: heads must be struck off, and that speedily: more Spanish blood requires to be shed than French.” “The hatchet of the executioner is the only answer to oppose to such arguments,” said an infuriated priest; “I am willing to undertake the office of such a debater. We have been assembled six months, and not one head has fallen.” These extreme opinions, it is true, were not approved by the majority of the assembly: and several speakers, having the eloquent Arguelles at their head, referred to England as the great example of the unconquerable energy which the freedom of the press can communicate to a nation, at the very time that it spreads the antidote to the passions and the errors of an excited

democracy. But the very fact of such opinions being advocated by any party, however extreme, in the legislature, was a clear indication of the perilous torrent which had been let loose; and it was already but too evident that in this, as in all other social contests during the *advance* of a revolution, the most violent opinions were likely to be the most successful. After a protracted debate, which lasted four days, the freedom of the press was established, under no other qualification than the exception of offences against religion, which were still to be taken cognisance of by the ordinary ecclesiastical courts, and a certain responsibility for individual or political delinquencies, which were to be adjudicated upon in a certain court erected for the purpose. The decree was promulgated in the middle of November; and there immediately issued from the press such a deluge of journals and ephemeral pamphlets, and such unmeasured vehemence of language, as demonstrated both how anxiously the Spanish urban population had thirsted for political discussion, and the imminent danger which they would run from the draught when first administered.¹

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Oct. 1810.

Nov. 10.

¹ Mart. i. 94.
95. Tor. iii.
415, 428.
Diario de
Cortes, ii.
441. South.
v. 99, 101.

At this period, also, there arose those important discussions between Spain and the South American colonies, which terminated, after a protracted contest and the shedding of oceans of blood, in the independence of those extensive and highly interesting states. This topic, however, is too vast for casual discussion, and must be reserved for a subsequent chapter, when it will form the leading subject of consideration.²

² Vide *in fra*,
c. lxvii.

It is remarkable that, from the very first opening of the Cortes, they manifested an impatient anxiety to abolish the separate immunities and privileges of the different provinces of Spain; and the "*Fueros*" of Biscay and Navarre were in an especial manner the object of their jealousy. The desire to extinguish them, and establish one uniform constitution for the whole monarchy, formed one of the leading objects of the party in the Spanish cities who urged on the assembly of the Cortes. In pursuance of this desire, a committee was appointed to draw up a constitution on a uniform and systematic plan; and on its preparation, as might naturally have

19.
Appointment
of a commit-
tee to frame
a constitution,
Dec. 23,
1811.

CHAP.
LXY.

1811.

1 Tor. iii.
445.20.
Heroic con-
duct of the
Cortes in
holding out
against the
French.
Jan. 1,
1811.

been expected, the principal attention of all parties at Cadiz was afterwards fixed. It cannot be denied that the project of establishing a perfect equality of civil rights between the members of the same community is equitable in theory, and apparently feasible in practice; but experience has proved that it is, of all other things, the most difficult to carry with safety into execution; and that, unless the inhabitants to whom it is applied are homogeneous in point of race, and equally advanced in point of civilisation, it is likely to produce the most disastrous effects upon the whole fabric of society.¹

In two important particulars the Cortes faithfully represented the feelings of the Spanish people, and exhibited an example of constancy in adverse fortune which will be for ever memorable in the annals of the world. They issued a resolute proclamation, in which they declared that they would "never lay down their arms till they recovered their sovereign, and regained the national independence; that the whole treaties, resignations of the crown, and proceedings at Bayonne, were null and void, as wanting the consent of the nation; that all engagements or obligations undertaken by the King while in captivity were illegal and of no effect; that they would never bend their knees to the usurper, nor treat for peace so long as a French soldier remained in the Peninsula, which they had invaded with such perfidy, and treated with such injustice." When it is recollected that this decree was issued at a time when the French legions beleaguered the ramparts of Cadiz, and the bombs from their batteries already reached the nearest houses of the city; that the whole of Spain, with the exception of Galicia, Asturias, and a part of Catalonia and Valencia, were in the possession of the invaders, who had moulded the conquered provinces into a regular government; and that Wellington and his gallant army were then cooped up within the lines of Torres Vedras, with hardly any prospect of being able to take an active part in the deliverance of the Peninsula, and but little hope of maintaining themselves on its soil;² it must be confessed that the Spanish historians have good reason to pride themselves on the constancy of their government,

¹ Decree,
Jan. 1, 1811.
Tor. iii. 450.
South. v. 102.

and that the annals of the Roman senate contain nothing more sublime.

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The other particular in which the Cortes faithfully represented the sentiments of the Spanish people, was in the respect which, in despite of their revolutionary tendency, they evinced to the Roman Catholic faith. Not but that there were many of its ardent spirits secretly enemies not merely to the Romish Church, which was there established in its most bigoted form, but to every other species of religious belief; and who longed for that general overthrow of all ecclesiastical establishments, and liberation from all restraints, human and divine, which in old corrupted societies constitutes the real spring of democratic agitation. But they were as yet too few in number to venture openly to promulgate their principles; and unfortunately, when emancipated from the shackles of the Romish creed, they had not judgment and principle enough to revert to the pure tenets of the *Catholic* or universal church, but flew at once into the infidelity and selfishness of the Parisian philosophy. Hence they made no attempts to moderate the fervour of the rural deputies; but, regarding the whole clerical institutions as an incubus on the state, which would ere long be removed, acquiesced in the mean time in all the declarations of the majority in favour of the ancient faith; and the Cortes exhibited the prodigy, during a few years, of a body animated with the strongest revolutionary principles, and yet professing the most implicit obedience to the rigid principles of the Church of Rome.¹

21.
Their rigid
adherence to
the Romish
faith.

¹ South. v.
107, 108.
Tor. iii. 418,
423.

The influence of these conflicting principles, and of the antagonist passions which in every age have most profoundly agitated society, signally appeared in the character of the constitution, which, after more than a year's discussion in the committee appointed to draw it up, and in the assembly, was finally approved of and sworn to by the Cortes on the 19th March 1812. The leading principles of this celebrated legislative fabric, which has become of such immense importance from subsequent events, were such as might have been expected from the composition of the assembly in which it originated. Supreme sovereignty was declared to reside in the nation; the Roman Catholic

22.
Principles of
the constitution
of 1812.

March 19.

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faith to be the sole religion of the state; the supreme legislative power to reside in the Cortes. That assembly was alone empowered to vote taxes and levies of men—to lay down regulations for the armed force—to nominate the supreme judges—to create a regency in the case of minority, incapacity, or other event suspensive of the succession—to enforce the responsibility of all public functionaries—and to introduce and enact laws. During the intervals of the session, the Cortes was to be represented by a permanent commission or deputation, to which a considerable part of its powers was committed, especially the care of watching over the execution of the laws and conduct of public functionaries, and the convocation of the assembly in case of need.¹

¹ Martignac, 97. Constitution of 1812. Tit. II. III.

23.
Powers of
the king.

The person of the king was declared inviolable, and his consent was requisite to the passing of laws; but he could not withhold his consent more than twice to different legislatures; if presented to him a third time, *he was forced to give his sanction*. He had the prerogative of pardon, but circumscribed within very narrow limits; he concluded treaties and truces with foreign powers, but they required for their ratification the consent of the Cortes; he had the command of the army, but all the regulations for its government were to emanate from the same body; he nominated the public functionaries, but only from a list furnished by the Cortes. The king was not to leave the kingdom nor marry without their consent; if he did so, he was to be held as having abdicated the throne. The nomination of the judges of the tribunals, to whose exclusive cognisance the conduct of public functionaries was subjected, was reserved to the same assembly. For the assistance of the king in discharging his royal functions, a privy council consisting of forty members, was appointed by him out of a list of one hundred and twenty presented by the Cortes: they could not be removed but by that body; and, in that number, there were only to be four *grandees* and four ecclesiastics. All vacant situations in the church, the bench, and the diplomatic departments, in like manner, were filled up by the king from a list of three presented to him by the Cortes;² and he was bound to consult the privy council in all matters of importance, particularly

² Mart. 17, 98. Tor. IV. 341, 342.

the conclusion of treaties, the sanction of laws, the declaration of war, and the conclusion of peace.

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Important as these institutions were in their tendency, and strongly as they savoured of that democratic spirit amidst which they were cradled, they yet yielded in magnitude to the vitality of the changes in the election and composition of the Cortes, which were established by the same constitution. It was carried by a large majority that the assembly should sit, as it was then constituted, in a single chamber, without, as of old, any separate place of assembly for the clergy or nobles, or any veto or power of rejection being vested in their members apart from those of the commons. Population was made the basis of representation : it was declared that there should be a member for every seventy thousand souls ; and that every man above the age of twenty-five, a native of the province, or who had resided in it for seven years, was qualified alike to elect or to be elected. No property was for the present insisted on as a qualification ; but it was left to future Cortes to legislate on this important point. The election of members took place by three successive steps of parishes, districts, and provinces ; but the boroughs, who sent members to the ancient assemblies, and the juntas, who were admitted to the representation in the present, were alike excluded. The American colonies were placed on a perfect equality, in the article of representation, with the European provinces of the monarchy ; the ministers, councillors, and persons in the household of the king, were excluded from a seat in the assembly ; the Cortes were to assemble every year, and to sit at least three months for the despatch of business ; no member of it was to be capable of holding any office under the crown ; it was to be re-elected every two years, and no individual who had been the member of one assembly, could be re-elected till a different legislature had intervened. Thus the Cortes, every two years, was to present an entirely new set of members from that which had preceded it.¹

24.
Constitution
of the Cortes.

¹ Tor. iv.
328, 331.

Such was the famous constitution of 1812—the Magna Charta of southern revolutionary Europe—the model on which the subsequent democratic constitutions of Spain, Portugal, Piedmont, and Naples, in 1820, were framed ;

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26.

Its vast
effect in stim-
ulating politi-
cal passions
in the Pen-
insula.

the brand which has filled the world with its flames, and from the conflagration raised by which both hemispheres are still burning. To an Englishman practically acquainted with the working of a free constitution, it is needless to expatiate on the necessary effect of vesting such powers in the people of an old state. If he reflects how long the institutions of England, habituated as she has been to the strain by centuries of freedom, could withstand the influence of universal suffrage, annual parliaments, the abolition of the House of Peers, the withdrawing of the legislative veto from the sovereign, an entire change of legislators every two years, and the practical vesting of the disposal of all offices of importance in the House of Commons ; he will easily understand what must have been the result of such a system among a people of mixed blood and hostile passions, of fiery temperament and towering ambition ; long subjected to despotism, wholly unused to freedom ; among whom political fervour was as yet untamed by suffering, and philanthropic ardour uncooled by experience ; where property, accumulated in huge masses among the nobles and clergy, was but scantily diffused through the middle classes ; and instruction was still more thinly scattered among any ranks of the people. But it was the fatal peculiarity of this constitution, that it so obviously and immediately opened the avenue to supreme power to the *urban* constituencies, and so entirely shut out and disinherited the *rural* nobility, and ecclesiastic orders and rural population, that it necessarily bequeathed the seeds of interminable discord between these classes to future ages ; because it gave a definite object and intelligent war-cry to the minority, massed together and in possession of the principal seats of influence in towns, while it established a system altogether insupportable to the majority, tenfold greater, but scattered and destitute of defence or rallying points in the country.

The reception which the new constitution met with in Spain, was such as might have been expected with regard to so great an innovation, in a country in which the urban constituencies were so zealous for change, and the rural inhabitants were so firmly attached to the institutions of their fathers. At Cadiz, Barcelona, Valencia, and

in general all the great towns, especially those of a commercial habit, the enthusiasm of the people at this great addition to their power was loudly and sincerely expressed: in the lesser boroughs in the interior, and in all the rural districts, where revolutionary ideas had not spread, and the ancient faith and loyalty were still all-powerful, it was the object of unqualified hatred. In vain the partisans of the new *régime* sought to persuade the people that the constitution was but a return to the old usages of the monarchy, cleared of the corruptions and abuses of ages. The good sense of the country inhabitants revolted at the idea that the King of Spain of old had been merely a puppet in the hands of the populace. The clergy could never see a confirmation of their privileges in institutions which, on the other side of the Pyrenees, had led to their total overthrow; the nobles beheld, in the concentration of all power in the hands of an assembly elected by universal suffrage, the certain forerunner of their total ruin. The provinces in the occupation of the French, which had sent no representatives to the Isle of Leon, embracing three-fourths of the monarchy, loudly complained that their rights and privileges had been reft from them by an assembly almost wholly elected at Cadiz, to which they were entire strangers. Thus, the whole country population were unanimous in their detestation of the new order of things; and it was easy to foresee that, if the matter were to be determined by the nation itself, the constitution would be rejected by an immense majority. But the partisans of the new constitution, though few in number, were incomparably better organised and favourably situated for active operations than their antagonists; and, being already in possession of all the strongholds of the kingdom, it was hard to say to which party, in the event of a struggle, victory might ultimately incline.¹

Wellington, from the very first, clearly perceived, and loudly denounced, the pernicious tendency of these measures on the part of the Spanish Cortes, not merely as diverting the attention of the government from the national defence, and wasting their time in fruitless discussions when the enemy was at their gates; but as tending to establish democratic principles and republican

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26.
Manner in which the constitution was received in Spain.

¹ Martignac, i. 99, 100.

27.

Wellington's clear perception and curious predictions of the effects of the Cortes and new Constitution.

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institutions in a country wholly unfitted for them, and which would leave to future ages the seeds of interminable discord in the Spanish monarchy. His prophecies, which are to be found profusely scattered throughout the later volumes of his correspondence, little attended to at the time from the absorbing interest of the contest with Napoleon, have now acquired an extraordinary interest, from the exact and melancholy accomplishment which subsequent events have given to his predictions. Before the Cortes had been assembled six weeks, he expressed to his brother, Henry Wellesley, then ambassador at Cadiz, his apprehensions that they were about to follow the usual course of democratic assemblies, and draw to themselves, in opposition to the wishes of the great bulk of the nation, the whole powers of government.* As they advanced in their career, and experience began to develop the practical result of their administration in the provinces, he repeatedly expressed his conviction of the general dissatisfaction which they had excited, and the very serious dangers to which they were urging the nation.†¹

¹ Gurw. vi.
559, ix. 524,
x. 54.

28.

His clear
opinion on
the subject
after visiting
Cadiz in
the spring of
1813.

But after his visit to Cadiz, on occasion of being appointed generalissimo of the Spanish armies in January 1813, he denounced, in the strongest terms, the wretched government, at once tyrannical at home and weak abroad, which the furious democracy of that city had produced; and predicted the ruinous effect both upon the fate of the war and the future prospects of the monarchy, of the constitution which they had established.‡

* "The natural course of all popular assemblies—of the Spanish Cortes, among others—is to adopt democratic principles, and to vest all the powers of the state in their own body; and this assembly must take care that they do not run in this tempting course, as the wishes of the nation are decidedly for a monarchy. By a monarchy alone it can be governed; and their inclination to any other form of government, and their assumption of the power and patronage of the state into their own hands, would immediately deprive them of the confidence of the people, and render them a worse government, and more impotent, because more numerous, than the central junta."—WELLINGTON to H. WELLESLEY, Nov. 4, 1810; Gurwood, vi. 559.

† "The Cortes are unpopular every where, and in my opinion deservedly so. Nothing can be more cruel, absurd, and impolitic, than their decrees respecting the persons who have served the enemy. It is extraordinary that the revolution in Spain has not produced one man with any knowledge of the real situation of the country. It appears as if they were all drunk; thinking and speaking of any other subject than Spain."—WELLINGTON to H. WELLESLEY, 1st Nov. 1812; Gurwood, ix. 524.

‡ "It is impossible to describe the state of confusion in which affairs are at Cadiz. The Cortes have formed a constitution very much on the principle that a painter paints a picture—viz. to be looked at; and I have not met one of its members, or any person of any description, either at Cadiz or elsewhere, who

His words, after a close personal view of the working of the democratic constitution, are deserving of profound attention, as designating the impression produced on an intellect of the highest order, by a state of things arising from the success of popular ambition, and therefore of lasting interest to mankind. "The greatest objection which I have to the new constitution is, that in a country in which almost all property consists in land, and there are the largest landed proprietors which exist in Europe, no measure should have been adopted, and no barrier provided, to guard landed property from the encroachments, injustice, and violence to which it is at all times liable, but particularly in the progress of revolutions. The council of state affords no such guard; it has no influence in the legislature; it can have no influence over the public mind. Such a guard can only be afforded by the establishment of an assembly of the great landed proprietors, such as our House of Lords, having concurrent powers with the Cortes; and you may depend upon it, there is no man in Spain, be his property ever so small, who is not interested in the establishment of such an assembly. Unhappily, legislative assemblies are swayed by the fears and passions of individuals: when unchecked, they are tyrannical and unjust; nay, more, it frequently happens that the most tyrannical and unjust measures are the most popular. Those measures are particularly popular which deprive rich and powerful individuals of their properties under the pretence of the public advantage; and I tremble for a country in which, as in Spain, there is *no barrier for the preservation of private property, excepting the justice of a legislative assembly possessing supreme power*. It is impossible to calculate upon the plans of such an assembly: they have no check whatever, and they are governed by the most ignorant and licentious of all licentious presses, that of Cadiz. I

considers the constitution as the embodying of a system according to which Spain is or can be governed. The Cortes have in form divested themselves of the executive power, and appointed a regency for that purpose: but the regency are in fact the slaves of the Cortes; and neither have either communication in a constitutional way with each other, nor any authority beyond the walls of Cadiz. I wish that some of our reformers would go to Cadiz to see the benefit of a sovereign popular assembly calling itself 'Majesty,' and of a written constitution. In truth, there is no authority in the state except the libellous newspapers, and they certainly ride over both Cortes and Regency without mercy."—WELLINGTON to LORD BATHURST, *Cadiz*, 27th Jan. 1813; GUERWOOD, x. 54.

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¹ Wellington
to Don Diego
de la Vega,
Jan. 29,
1813;
and Earl
Bathurst,
April 21,
1813. Gurw.
x. 64, 65,
247, xi. 91.

believe they mean to attack the royal and feudal tenths, and the tithes of the church, under pretence of encouraging agriculture; and, finding the contributions from these sources not so extensive as they expected, they will seize the estates of the grandees. Our character is involved in a greater degree than we are aware of, in the democratical transactions of the Cortes, in the opinion of all moderate well-thinking Spaniards, and, I am afraid, with the rest of Europe. It is quite impossible such a system can last: what I regret is, that I am the person who maintains it. If the King should return, he also will overturn the whole fabric if he has any spirit; but the gentlemen at Cadiz are so completely masters, that I am afraid there must be another convulsion."¹

29.
Wise policy
of the British
government
regarding the
Cortes.

The British government were well aware, while democratic frenzy was thus reigning triumphant at Cadiz, from the despatches of their ambassador there, the Honourable H. Wellesley, as well as from Wellington's information of the dangerous nature of the spirit which had thus been evolved, that they had a task of no ordinary difficulty to encounter, in any attempt to moderate its transports. The Spanish people, long and proverbially jealous of foreign interference, had recently evinced this peculiarity in so remarkable a degree, that even when defeated in a hundred encounters, and bleeding at every pore from the want of any general competent to stem the progress of disaster, and give unity to the operations of their different armies, they still refused to give the command to the British hero who had arrested at Talavera the tide of success, and rolled back from Torres Vedras the wave of conquest; even though he has recorded his opinion, that, if they had done so, he could have saved their country as he did Portugal.* In these circumstances, any decided or marked interference on the part of Great Britain with the proceedings either of the Cortes at Cadiz, or of the regency in its formation, would not only, in all probability, have totally failed in its object, but possibly have cooled their ardour in

* "I understand the Spanish government may perhaps offer me the command of their armies. If they had done so a year and a half ago, and they had set seriously to work to feed and pay their army, the cause would have been saved; nay, it would have been saved without such an arrangement, if the battle of Ocana had not been fought in November 1809."—WELLINGTON to LORD LIVERPOOL, 2d Feb. 1811; GURWOOD, vii. 216.

the cause of independence, and thrown the party in Spain, in possession of the few remaining strongholds it possessed, headlong into the arms of the enemy. In these circumstances, the British cabinet, albeit noways insensible to the dangers of the republican government which had thus grown up, as it were, under their very wing at Cadiz, and its strange inconsistency with their own principles, as well as those on which the war had been conducted, nevertheless deemed it expedient not to intermeddle with the internal affairs of their ally, and to comply literally with the advice of Wellington, "to keep themselves clear of the democracy, and to interfere in nothing while the government was in their hands, excepting in carrying on the war and keeping out the foreign enemy."¹

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¹ Wellington
to Lord
Bathurst,
Sept. 5, 1813.
Gurw. xi. 91.

It was chiefly with a view, however, to obtain a legitimate head for the government at Cadiz, and if possible extricate Spain by legal means from the abyss into which she was falling, that the English cabinet at this time made a serious attempt to effect the deliverance of Ferdinand VII. from his imprisonment at Valençay. The captive king, and his brother Don Carlos, were there detained, living sumptuously, but so narrowly watched as to render their escape apparently impossible. Notwithstanding all the vigilance of the police, however, the British government contrived to communicate with him by means of the Baron Kolli, a man of skilful address and intrepid character, in whom the Marquis Wellesley had entire confidence. The project for their deliverance, when on the point of succeeding, was betrayed by an agent to whom a subordinate part in its execution had been committed. Ferdinand himself revealed the plot to his jailers, and Kolli was arrested and committed to Vincennes. He refused, however, with unshaken constancy, to divulge any thing which could involve either Ferdinand or the British ministry; but the French police took advantage of the discovery they had made, to endeavour to entrap the royal captives into some hazardous attempt by means of a false Kolli, who was despatched to Valençay. The penetration of the Spanish king, however, detected the disguise, and nothing followed on the insidious attempt.²

30.
Abortive
attempt to
effect the
liberation of
Ferdinand
VII.

March 24,
1810.

² Hard. xi.
150. Bign.
ix. 448.

The military condition of the French in Spain, notwithstanding the disastrous issue of the expedition into

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31.
Military con-
dition of the
French in
Spain in
Spring 1811.

Feb. 5, 1810.

1 Bign. ix.
269, 271.
Hard. xi. 151.

Portugal, had been essentially improved, so far as the command of the resources of the country went, in the course of the campaign of 1810. The successful irruption of Soult into Andalusia, in its commencement, had given them the entire disposal of the riches and harvests of that opulent province; and although the dispersion of force which it occasioned, in consequence of the continued resistance of Cadiz, proved in the end, as the event showed, extremely detrimental to their interests in the Peninsula; yet in the first instance it greatly augmented the means at their disposal, and diffused the pleasing hope, which seems to have gained possession of all the counsellors of Joseph, that the war was at length approaching its termination. So completely did hostilities appear to be concluded to the south of the Sierra Morena, that Joseph Buonaparte crossed that formidable barrier; published at Cordova an ominous decree, in which he declared, that "if Spain became again the friend of France, it was for the interest of Napoleon to preserve its integrity, if not, to dismember and destroy it;" entered Seville amidst the acclamations of the higher class of citizens, who were fatigued with the war, and hopeless of its success; received from the civic authorities there the standards taken at the battle of Baylen; accepted the services of a royal guard, organised for his service in the southern provinces; and, amidst the apparent transports of the people, arrived at the lines before Cadiz, and made the tour of the bay almost within reach of the Spanish batteries. Seduced by these flattering appearances, the monarch appears for a time to have trusted to the pleasing hope that his difficulties were at an end; that all classes of Spaniards would at length rally round his standard; and that, supported by his faithful population, he might at length obtain not merely the shadow but the substance of a throne, emancipated from the burdensome tutelage of his imperial brother.¹

But if Joseph for a brief period gave way to this pleasing illusion, he was not long of being awakened from it by the acts of Napoleon himself. Early in February a decree was issued by him, which organised into four governments the provinces of Catalonia, Aragon, Biscay, and Navarre; and charged the military governor of each

of them with the entire direction of affairs, civil and military. The police, the administration of justice, the collection and disposal of the revenue, were intrusted to them equally with the warlike arrangements of the provinces; and the fundamental condition on which this more than regal power was held by the marshals was, that they should make no demands on the imperial treasury, and that the districts under their command should feed, clothe, lodge, and pay the numerous French corps which occupied them. Deeper designs, however, than the temporary occupation of a portion of the Spanish monarchy, the whole of which was overrun by his troops, were involved in this decree of the Emperor; and what these designs were are explained in a letter of this period from the Duke of Cadore (Champagny) to the French ambassador at Madrid:—"The intention of the Emperor is to *unite to France the whole left bank of the Ebro*, and perhaps the territory as far as the Douro. One of the objects of the decree is to prepare for that annexation; and you will take care, without letting a hint fall as to the designs of the Emperor, to prepare matters for this change, and facilitate all the measures which his Majesty may take to carry it into execution." Thus Napoleon, after having solemnly guaranteed the integrity of Spain, first by the treaty of Fontainebleau to Ferdinand VII., and again by that of Bayonne to Joseph, was now preparing, in violation of both engagements, to seize a large part of its territory, and one which commanded the whole remainder of it, by the spoliation of his own brother, whom he had put upon the throne.¹

Notwithstanding all the precautions of the Emperor, however, to keep his designs secret, they transpired so far as to awaken in Joseph the most anxious solicitude as to the preservation of his crown and the integrity of his dominions. To avert the stroke as far as possible, under pretence of congratulating his brother on his marriage with the Austrian archduchess, he despatched to Paris M. Asanza, an intrepid and able Spaniard, zealous for the interests of his country, and peculiarly solicitous of preserving the province of his birth, Navarre, for the crown of Castile. Asanza, on his arrival at Paris, found that the expense of the Spanish war, which it was said had already

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32.
Napoleon's
intentions as
to dismem-
bering Spain
at this time.
Feb. 8.

Feb. 19, 1810.

¹ Champagny
to Delaforest,
Feb. 19, 1810.
Bign. ix. 270,
274.

33.

Negotiation
between
Napoleon and
Joseph for
the dismem-
berment of
Spain.

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cost the imperial treasury above two hundred millions of francs (£8,000,000), was the great subject of complaint with the cabinet of St Cloud; and without openly divulging the project of incorporating with France the territory north of the Ebro, Champagny made no secret of the wish of the Emperor to obtain, and his right to demand, more valuable indemnities than the barren satisfaction of having placed an incapable and prodigal brother on the throne of Madrid. When Asanza pleaded strongly for the integrity of Spain, and the obligation of the Emperor to support his brother, he was openly told by the imperial minister, that, strong as the Emperor's obligations to the members of his family were, his obligations to France were still stronger; and that "Joseph would do well to recollect that he held in his power the Prince of Asturias, Ferdinand, whom he was strongly tempted to send into Spain, and who would make no scruple, as the price of his liberty, to cede the required provinces, or any thing else which might be required of him."¹ *

¹ Asanza's letter, July 20, 1810.

34.
Decree establishing French military governments in the north of Spain.

May 29.

Aug. 2.

² See Asanza to Joseph, July 1811. Bign. ix. 278, 285. Hard. xi. 152, 155.

Asanza, unable either to fathom the secret intentions or get any satisfaction as to the public deeds of the Emperor, returned downcast to Madrid, where general gloom had succeeded to the first transports of joy among the adherents of Joseph at the conquest of Andalusia; and unequivocal acts on the part of Napoleon soon demonstrated his real designs, and at what price he estimated the phantom of a king which he had established in Spain. A fresh decree, in addition to that which had created the four military governments already established, formed two new ones, embracing the whole country to the north of the Douro; the first of these comprising the province of Burgos; the second, those of Valladolid, Palencia, and Toro: and this was soon followed by another, which gave Soult the exclusive direction of the army and the provinces to the south of the Sierra Morena. Thus, while Suchet was actively conducting the work of conquest in Catalonia and Valencia, and Soult was living in more than regal magnificence at Seville, the unhappy Joseph, almost destitute of resources, lingered on, a shadow, at Madrid,² with-

* The letters of Asanza to the court of Madrid were intercepted by the guerillas, forwarded to Cadiz, and published by the Regency. Wellington quotes, and Bignon refers to them, without either throwing the slightest doubt on their authenticity or accuracy.—See BIGNON, ix. 280.

out either being intrusted with the duties, or enjoying the splendour of royalty.

Napoleon's favourite project of securing the northern provinces of the Peninsula for himself, soon assumed a more tangible form, and became the subject of open negotiation with the cabinet of Madrid. In this negotiation the plenipotentiaries of Spain in vain appealed to the treaty of Bayonne, by which the integrity of the monarchy was guaranteed: Champagny replied, in the name of the Emperor, and from his dictation, that the convention of Bayonne had *de facto* disappeared, by the majority of its members having passed over to the insurgents; that Spain owed a large indemnity for the sacrifices in men and money which he had made in her behalf; and that, as she could never repay the debt, he must insist on the cession of the whole provinces to the north of the Ebro, including Catalonia, for ten years. Finding the Emperor resolute, the Spanish plenipotentiaries strove only to gain time: the more pressing concerns of the north engrossed his attention; and, before his dominion in the Peninsula was so well established as to render it practicable to carry the transference formally into effect, the whole country was reft alike from France and Joseph by the arms of England, and the star of Napoleon set for ever beneath the snows of Russia.¹

Such, however, was the destitution to which the court of Madrid was reduced, during the whole of the winter of 1810 and spring of 1811, that in January 1811, Joseph intimated to Napoleon, "that the French marshals intercepted his revenue, disregarded his orders, insulted his government, and oppressed and ruined his country. He himself had been appointed to the throne of Spain without his own consent; and though he would never oppose the Emperor's will, yet he would not live a degraded king; and therefore he was ready to resign, unless the Emperor would come in person and remedy the evils." Struck with the decision of this announcement, and the obvious justice of the complaints on which it was founded, the Emperor so far interposed in behalf of his unhappy brother, as to fix, by an imperial edict, the monthly sums at which the allowance of the whole military officers of the Peninsula, from the marshals, governors of provinces,

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35.

Efforts of the
Spanish
envoys to
prevent it.

¹ Bign. ix.
285, 287.
Hard. xi.
154, 155.

36.

Joseph in
disgust at
length resigns
his crown.
Jan. 19, 1811.

Jan. 23, 1811.

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to the sub-lieutenants, should be fixed ; and directed that 500,000 francs (£20,000) should be remitted monthly from Paris to defray the most urgent demands of his household. This relief, however, proved altogether insufficient. The whole civil functionaries of the crown were seven months in arrear of their salaries ; the public treasury was empty ; the King had not money at his disposal to give a respectable dinner to the ambassadors ; and he was incessantly besieged with complaints of oppression, which he had no means of relieving. To such a height at length did the mortifications of the court of Madrid arrive, and so completely were all the royal revenues intercepted by the legal or illegal exactions of the marshals, that, in the beginning of May, Joseph set out from Madrid, and, to Napoleon's no small embarrassment, arrived in Paris to lay his resignation at his feet. Thus was the prodigy exhibited, not merely of three brothers of a soldier of fortune from Corsica being elevated by that soldier to European thrones ; but of two of them, Louis and Joseph, being reduced to such mortifications, by his imperious temper and rigorous exactions, that they renounced their crowns to escape them ; while a third, Lucien, had taken refuge from his persecution in the dominions of his most persevering and inveterate enemy.¹

May 29,
1811.

¹ See Joseph's papers taken at Vittoria, Nap. iv. 517, 533. App.

37.
Terms of accommodation between him and Napoleon.

Napoleon, who was well aware what a subject of scandal these divisions in the imperial family would afford to Europe, and how strongly they would confirm the declamations of the English press against the insupportable nature of his rule, did his utmost to appease the incensed monarch. Partly by argument, partly by persuasion, partly by threats, he prevailed on the fugitive king to place again on his head his crown of thorns : and, after some weeks' residence at Paris, he returned to Madrid, having concluded a private treaty, which in some degree obviated the most intolerable of his grievances. By this compact it was stipulated that the army of the centre should be placed directly under the orders of the King of Spain : he was to receive a quarter of the contributions levied by the marshals in their several provinces, for the maintenance of his court and government, and for the support of the army of the centre, and of the Spaniards who had enlisted in his service, who

July 1811.

amounted to nearly thirty thousand men ; and the half million of francs, hitherto given monthly to the King, was to be increased to a million. But the Emperor would not relinquish the military direction of the war, or the command of the provinces by his marshals ; they were still to correspond with Berthier, and take all their directions from the Tuileries. Napoleon also strongly counselled the convocation of a Cortes at Madrid to consider the state of the nation, and form a set-off against that assembled in the Island of Leon, which he characterised as “a miserable canaille of obscure agitators.” By June 1811. these promises and injunctions Joseph was for the time pacified ; and he returned to Madrid in July, where his situation appeared for a while to be improved by the successes of Marshal Suchet in the east of Spain. But the promised remittances from Paris were never regularly made ; the former disputes with the marshals about the contributions revived ; the project of the Cortes was adjourned from Wellington’s successes in the next campaign ; and, in less than two years, nothing remained of Joseph’s government but the recollection of the oppression of which he had been the impotent spectator, and the privations of which he had been the real victim.¹

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¹ Nap. iv.
126, 127.
Papers taken
at Vittoria,
Ibid. iv. 533,
541, App.

While the governments of France and Spain were thus arranging between themselves the proportions in which they were to divide between each other the spoils of the Peninsula, and Napoleon was securing the lion’s share to himself, a lingering but unconquerable resistance was still presented in the few strongholds which remained in the hands of the patriots. It was in a very few quarters, however, that the contest was continued : the greater part of the country was subdued ; its resources were almost all at the conqueror’s disposal ; and, in a military point of view, the conquest might be considered as complete. Both the Castiles, with the capital, were in the victor’s power ; Andalusia and Grenada, with their rich and hitherto untouched fields of plunder, were at his disposal ; and the northern provinces, including the passes of the Pyrenees, the whole of Aragon, and the greater part of Catalonia, were strongly garrisoned by his troops. The recent successes in the latter province, particularly the fall of Gerona, Hostalrich, Lerida, and

38.
Prosperous
condition of
the French
at this
period in
Spain.

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Mequinenza, had both opened to the French arms the road from Perpignan to Barcelona, and established them in a solid manner on the Ebro; and nothing was wanting but the conquest of Tortosa and Tarragona to enable Suchet to carry his victorious arms into Valencia, and subject the whole eastern provinces to the Emperor's sway. On the other side, they were still excluded from the kingdom of Portugal, and a disastrous campaign had followed the invasion of that country; but the English armies appeared in no sufficient strength to disturb them beyond the Spanish frontier; and the possession of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz promised to secure the Castiles against any serious incursion from their ancient antagonists in that quarter.¹

¹ Belm. i.
185, Nap. iv.
51.

39.
Distribution
of their
forces.

Great as the extent of territory occupied by the French generals was, the forces at their disposal were fully equal to their necessities. Seventy-five thousand men in Andalusia, under the command of Soult, maintained the blockade of Cadiz, retained the whole provinces to the south of the Sierra Morena in subjection, and watched over the security of Badajoz, on the Portuguese frontier. Fifty thousand were still ready in Leon to assemble round the standard of Marmont, who had succeeded Massena in the command of the army of Portugal; sixty thousand more, under Bessières, at Valladolid, Biscay, and Leon, watched the Spanish force at the entrance of the Galician defiles, and secured the important line of communication by Vittoria to Bayonne; while in the eastern provinces, Macdonald, with forty-five thousand men, lay at Gerona and Hostalrich, guarding the important entrance by Perpignan into Catalonia. Suchet, after providing for all his fortresses, could still bring thirty thousand excellent troops into the field for active operation; while twenty thousand more under Joseph and Jourdan at Madrid, and fifteen thousand under Regnier, in Estremadura and La Mancha, overawed the capital, and maintained the communication between the different parts of this immense military establishment.^{1*}

¹ Imperial
Muster Rolls,
April 1811.
Napier, iii.
570, 571, and
iv. 51, Belm.
i. 185.

The vital point of resistance to all this stupendous array was to be found within the walls of Cadiz; but, though the force there was above twenty thousand strong,

* See Appendix, A, Chap. LXV.

yet it was composed of such various nations, and in great part so disorganised and depressed, that little reliance could be placed on its efficiency even for the defence of that last stronghold of Spanish independence. Five thousand English and Portuguese, who arrived immediately after the French troops appeared before its walls in February 1810, from Lisbon and Gibraltar, under General Stewart, were excellent soldiers; but the remaining fifteen thousand, composed of the refugees from Seville, and the gallant men who had come up under Albuquerque,* were in the most miserable state, without shoes, pay, or clothing, and hardly any remaining ammunition. The regency was without vigour or consideration; the public stores were shamefully dilapidated by private cupidity; and such was the general despondence and confusion which prevailed, that if Victor's troops had, immediately on their arrival at the bay, pushed on and attacked the defences on the isthmus which connected the city with the mainland, they in all probability would have carried them, and, but for the arrival of the English troops, certainly would have done so. As it was, the exterior forts on the mainland side of the bay were abandoned and dismantled in the general consternation; and from Fort Matagorda, the most advanced and important outwork on their side, the French bombs could reach the upper harbour and a considerable part of the city.¹

In the other quarters of Spain appearances were, if possible, still more unpromising. Twenty-five thousand men, indeed, in Valencia, and twelve thousand in Murcia, still hoisted the colours of independence; but their composition, equipment, and discipline, were so wretched that military discernment could already anticipate, what the event soon proved, that no reliance was to be placed on them in the field, and but little in the defence of fortified places. In Catalonia, though a desultory warfare was kept up in the mountains, no force existed capable of keeping the field in the level country; and the campaign was in reality reduced to the sieges of Tortosa and Tarragona, the last important strongholds which the Spaniards possessed in that province. At the same time, in Galicia, the new levies, nearly fifteen thousand strong, were

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40.
Forces
assembled in
Cadiz by the
Allies.

¹ Thib. viii.
259, 260, and
Napier, iii.
173, 174.
Belm. i. 184.
Tor. iii. 196,
197.

41.
Spanish and
British forces
in the Penin-
sula.

* *Ante*, Chap. lxiii. § 46.

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¹ Behn. i.
185, 186.
Vict. et Conq.
xx. 8, 10.
Nap. iii. 178.
180. Thib.
viii. 259, 260.

unable, from their want of discipline, to emerge from their mountain defiles; and the guerilla parties in the central provinces, though exceedingly harassing to the enemy's communications, were detached from each other, and altogether inefficient as a force in regular warfare. Thus eighty or ninety thousand men, for the most part ill-disciplined, and worse equipped, shut up in fortified places along the sea-coast, and altogether detached from each other, were all that remained of the Spanish forces, to contend with above three hundred thousand French soldiers, admirably equipped, under the guidance of veteran generals, masters of all the entrances into and main roads through the country, in possession of its principal strongholds, and the whole interior lines of communication through its provinces. In these circumstances, it required not the gift of prescience to foresee that the weight of the contest would fall on the English and Portuguese army; and that unless Wellington, with his fifty thousand disciplined soldiers, could strike a decisive blow at the heart of the enemy's power, the cause of the Peninsula, and with it the hope of European independence, was lost.¹

42.
Description
of the Isle of
Leon.

CADIZ, the keystone of the strong but disjointed arch of resistance which still encircled Spain, was a city, the natural strength of which had, from the most remote ages, rendered it an important object in the Peninsular wars. The Gaditane Isle, or Isle of Leon, indeed, is by nature so strong as to require but little assistance from art to become altogether impregnable. It consists of an island three leagues long, and one and three quarters broad, in the form of an irregular triangle, situated in the sea, at the mouth of the Guadaleta river; and separated from the adjacent continent by the San Pedro channel, an arm of the sea nine miles long, about three hundred yards wide, and of depth sufficient to float a seventy-four, which receives the waters of all the streams that descend from the heights on the mainland, and is bounded on the continent by salt marshes of still greater breadth. The great road from Cadiz to Seville crosses this channel and marsh by the bridge of Zuazo, which on the approach of the French was broken down, while the approach to it was defended by powerful batteries on

either side. The arsenal Caraccas stands on the extremity of the Isle of Leon, nearest to the bridge and mainland, but from the breadth of the marsh it could not be reached save by water or bombardment; and, on the other side of the bridge, the castle of San Pedro commanded all the opposite shore and approaches to the marsh. The whole Isle of Leon is composed of a salt marsh, with the exception of the ridge on which the town of Isla, containing eighteen thousand inhabitants, is placed, and the sandhills at the opposite extremity, running out into the sea, on which Cadiz is built, which in general numbers eighty, but was then encumbered by above a hundred and fifty thousand souls.¹

The great road by the bridge of Zuazo, which runs through the town of Isla, is elevated on, and runs for two leagues along, a narrow isthmus, between the Atlantic on the one side and the inner salt marsh of the island on the other; and it is cut in various places by ditches, and intersected by redoubts, which, presenting successive points of defence, rendered attack from without extremely difficult, even if the bridge of Zuazo and town of Isla had been carried. At the close of all, Cadiz itself, situated at the extremity of the isthmus, arose, strongly fortified on that side; the neck of land which approached it was exposed to the concentric fire of numerous and formidable batteries; and an advancing enemy would be exposed to a flanking fire from the vessels of war on the one side, and gun-boats on the other. Nearly two thousand guns in all were mounted on the immense circuit of the works; but many of the fortifications were unskilfully constructed, and not less than thirty thousand men were requisite to provide them with proper garrisons. The promontory of the mainland which approaches nearest to the city was armed by two strong forts, called the Trocadero and Matagorda; but even if they were carried by the besiegers, the immense batteries of the Puntales stood directly opposite, on the other side of the channel, at the distance only of twelve hundred yards; while the nearest parts of Cadiz itself were still four thousand yards, or nearly two miles and a half, from the most advanced point to which the besiegers' batteries could be pushed.²

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¹ Tor. iii.
195. Nap.
iii. 173. Vict.
et Conq. xx.
9, 10.

43.
And city of
Cadiz.

² Tor. iii. 195,
197. Nap. iii.
173, 175.
Hard. xi. 144.
Vict. et Conq.
xx. 10, 11.

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44.
Arrival of the
British
troops, and
first measures
of defence.

General Stewart arrived at Cadiz, with two thousand British troops, from Gibraltar on the 11th February ; and in a few days two thousand more English and Portuguese were received from Lisbon, who were welcomed with loud acclamations by the inhabitants, impending danger having completely extinguished the hitherto inveterate jealousy entertained by the Spaniards of foreign interference. They found the people zealously engaged in exertions to repair and strengthen the fortifications ; and multitudes, in particular, were labouring day and night in cutting a deep ditch across the *chaussée* on the isthmus leading to Cadiz, in the narrowest part, so as to bring both seas to its foot, and constructing strong walls of masonry and batteries on either side. Their efforts, however, though stimulated by all the ardour of patriotic enthusiasm, were ill directed ; confusion and dilapidation pervaded every part of the public administration ; and such was the ignorance of the Spanish engineers of the plainest principles of the military art, that, while they had abandoned the strongholds of the Trocadero and Matagorda, from whence the enemy's shells could reach the city, they had pushed their advanced posts on the road to Seville, a mile and a half beyond the Zuazo bridge ; that is, into a situation where they were exposed to attack on either flank, and where defeat would endanger the bridge itself, and the whole extensive defences of the Isle of Leon.¹

¹ Tor. iii.
196, 197.
Nap. 177,
179. Thib.
viii. 262, 263.

45.
Noble
defence of
Matagorda
by the
British.
Feb. 22.

The first care of General Stewart after his arrival was to regain Fort Matagorda, where batteries were already constructing to bombard Cadiz. This important service was successfully performed by Captain M'Laine,* at the head of a hundred and fifty seamen and marines. Its dismantled works were hastily restored, and guns planted on the ramparts, which not only silenced the field-pieces of the enemy directed against them, but severely galled their advancing works on the Trocadero Point. The whole efforts of the French were therefore directed to regain possession of this fort on the mainland ; and with such vigour were their operations conducted, and such resources for a siege did they find in the arsenal of

* Now Colonel Sir Archibald M'Laine, of the family of the M'Laines of Lochbuy, in Inverness-shire.

Seville, that in a few weeks they had fifty pieces of heavy cannon placed in battery against its walls ; while a Spanish seventy-four and armed flotilla, which had hitherto co-operated in the defence, were obliged, by a tempest of red-hot shot, to slip their cables and move across to Cadiz. The feeble rampart soon gave way before this tremendous weight of metal ; the walls were ruined, and the enemy's balls flew so thick that a flag-staff bearing the Spanish colours was broken six times in an hour, and at last they could only be kept flying by being nailed to the corner of the rampart. Yet the heroic little garrison, with their dauntless commander, Captain M'Laine, still maintained their ground, and from the midst of the ruins kept up an unquenchable fire on the besiegers. For six-and-thirty hours this marvellous resistance was prolonged, till at length General Graham, who had succeeded to the command of the British troops in the Isle, finding that half of that band were killed or wounded, withdrew them in boats to the opposite side : and the bastions, after being blown up, were abandoned to the enemy.^{1*}

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The brave resistance of this little band of heroes proved the salvation of Cadiz, and eventually exercised a material influence on that of the civilised world. For fifty-five days they had held the post on the enemy's side, and in the midst of his batteries ; and by simply maintaining it they had prevented any attack being made in other quarters. During this important interval the panic had subsided in Cadiz ; the British troops had been augmented to eight thousand men by reinforcements from Lisbon and Gibraltar ; six millions of dollars, recently arrived from Mexico, had replenished the public treasury ; heavy taxes on houses within, and imports into Cadiz, furnished a small permanent revenue ; the Spanish garrison was considerably augmented by volunteer battalions raised in the city, and numerous detachments brought by sea from different points in the coast ; the whole ships of war had

46.
Increased
means of
defence
accumulated
in Cadiz.

* A memorable instance of female heroism occurred at this siege. A sergeant's wife, named *Retson*, was in a casemate with the wounded men, when a drummer-boy was ordered to fetch water from the well of the fort. On going out the boy faltered under the severity of the fire, upon which she took the vessel from him ; and although a shot cut the bucket cord when in her hand, she braved the terrible cannonade, and brought the water in safety to the wounded men. This heroine still lives, and is at present a matron in the town hospital of Glasgow. —NAPIER, iii. 181 ; and *Sketch of a Soldier's Life in Ireland*, 72.

1 Nap. iii.
180. 181.
Thib. viii.
264.

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been brought round from Ferrol; and thirty thousand men in arms within the walls, supported by a fleet of twenty-three ships of the line, of which four were British, and twelve frigates, were in a condition not only to defy any attack, but to menace the enemy in the lines which they were constructing round the bay. Victor, who was at the head of the blockading force, had not above twenty thousand men under his command, so widely had the vast French force which burst into Andalusia been dispersed to compel obedience and levy contributions over its wide-extended territory. Despairing, therefore, of carrying the place by open force, he resolved to turn the siege into a blockade; and, for this purpose, vast intrenchments were constructed round the bay, at the distance of a league and a half beyond the exterior defences of the Isle of Leon, on which the French army laboured for two years, and which, equally with those defences themselves, remain a monument for the admiration of future ages.¹

¹ Jom. iii.
419. Tor. iii.
199, 201.
Thib. viii.
265. Nap.
iii. 182, 183.

47.
Description
of the French
lines round
Cadiz.

These gigantic lines of circumvallation, setting out from Rota, a village on the coast, on the north of the bay of Cadiz, passed through the towns of St Maria and Puerto Real on the sea-shore, ascended the semicircular range of hills which forms the eastern boundary of the great salt marsh, and after passing through Chiclana, regained the sea at the tower of Barneja, three leagues to the south of Cadiz. Thus they formed an immense semicircle, ten leagues in length, resting at each extremity on the sea, and embracing within its ample circuit the Isle of Leon, lying in the centre of the bay, and separated at every point from the besiegers there by an intervening arm of the ocean and vast salt marsh, in general a league across. On these works, upwards of three hundred pieces of cannon, drawn from the arsenal of Seville, were, before the end of the year 1810, planted by the French engineers; the forts of Matagorda and Trocadero, the advanced posts of their lines, were greatly strengthened, and armed with powerful batteries; while mortars of a prodigious size were cast at Toulon, and sent by sea, by Malaga, to Cadiz, in order to annoy the shipping in the bay or the city. Other advantages, however, accrued to the French from this position: fifteen hundred prisoners, on board two hulks at Cadiz, who had been detained there since the

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battle of Baylen, cut their cables, drifted during a heavy gale to the French side of the bay, and rejoined their comrades, notwithstanding all the fire of the Spanish batteries, after a deplorable captivity of two years. At the same time, General Lacy, who had advanced with three thousand men to aid the peasants of the Sierra de Ronda, who had taken up arms to resist the French spoliating columns, was, after some successes, surrounded by their forces in every direction, cut off from Gibraltar, and compelled, after sustaining severe loss, to re-embark at Estipona for Cadiz.¹

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1810.

June 18.
1 Nap. iii.
182, 184.
Thib. viii.
264, 265.
Jom. iii. 419,
421. Tor. iii.
301, 302.

But it was soon found that the damage which could be effected in this way was very inconsiderable; and although Soult was indefatigable in his efforts, it was very apparent that he had slight hope of reducing the place by force of arms. In truth, under the pretext of maintaining the blockade of the fortress, his real object was to construct a barrier which might prevent the garrison from issuing forth, and the English from rekindling, from that base, the flames of war in the Andalusian provinces. Victor, accordingly, was left in the works with a force never exceeding twenty thousand men, wholly inadequate to undertake active operations against the Isle of Leon, and barely sufficient to guard the immense circuit of the lines; Soult and Sebastiani established themselves with powerful garrisons at Seville and Grenada, where they strove, by a profuse expenditure and sumptuous entertainments, to render the French sway popular in the provinces of which these cities were the capitals; Mortier lay in the neighbourhood of the Sierra Morena, and observed the great road to Badajoz; while detached columns traversed the country in all directions, repressing the guerillas, levying contributions to defray the heavy expenses of the generals, and seizing the paintings which now form the unrivalled collection of the works of the Spanish masters in Marshal Soult's hotel at Paris.²

48.
Positions of
the French
armies in
Andalusia
and Grenada.

s Tor. iii.
236. Nap.
iii. 188,
192. Thib.
viii. 266.
Jom. iii. 421.

Though the forces at the disposal of the French generals were altogether irresistible in the field, and gave them the entire command of the open country, yet the Spaniards in the mountains were still unsubdued: Romana and Ballasteros in the Sierra Morena, to the south of Estremadura; Blake and Elio on the confines of

49.
Desultory
warfare still
kept up in the
mountains of
Andalusia.

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1810.

May 9.

1 *Jorn.* iii.
421, 422.
Tor. iii. 236,
246. *Nap.*
iii. 188, 196.
Thib. viii.
266, 267.

Murcia; and numerous bodies of armed peasants in the mountains of Ronda, still maintained a desultory resistance, cut off the French detachments when they ventured too near their fastnesses, and preserved afloat the standard of independence, which might again be unfurled if happier days should dawn upon their country. To such a degree were the French irritated and annoyed by this harassing warfare, that Soult on the 9th May, issued a proclamation, declaring the army of King Joseph the only regular Spanish force, and designating the whole patriot bands as armed banditti, to whom no quarter should be given; and this enactment was carried into effect by the burning of several villages, and execution of their inhabitants, who had taken part in the insurrection. The regency for some time made no reprisals; but the exterminating system being continued, they at length issued a decree, declaring that for every Spaniard thus murdered three Frenchmen should be put to death; and this resolution having in some instances been acted upon, a stop was at length put, at least in the south, to this inhuman species of hostility.¹

50.
Operations in
Catalonia.
Preparations
for the siege
of Tortosa.

While a noble constancy amidst misfortunes was thus exhibited within the ramparts of Cadiz, and the standard of independence floated only in the south of the Peninsula in inaccessible deserts, or on the summit of the mountains, Suchet was commencing that energetic and skilful campaign which proved so fatal to the Spaniards on the east of Spain. It has been already noticed with what ability he had effected the reduction of Lerida and Mequinenza, and how much his successes were paralysed by the disasters of Augereau, in the northern parts of the province.* Napoleon was so highly gratified by these successes, and mortified by the simultaneous reverses of his other general, that he resolved to intrust his successful lieutenant with the important mission of completing the reduction of the province, and to deprive the unsuccessful one of his command. Augereau accordingly was recalled, and Macdonald,† restored to favour by his glorious exploit at the battle of Wagram, was appointed to the direction of the northern parts of the province. Two great roads only existed at that period in Catalonia, the one from

* *Ante*, Chap. lxiii. § 50, 51.

† *Ante*, Chap. lxiii. § 53.

Barcelona to Saragossa, the other by the sea-coast from Perpignan, by Gerona, Barcelona, Tarragona, Tortosa, and Peniscola, to Valencia. Of the first road the French, since the fall of Lerida, were entirely masters; but the second was in their power only as far as Barcelona. Napoleon directed his lieutenants to proceed immediately to the reduction of the remaining strongholds on this line, the success of which would at once give him the command of the great communication along the east coast of Spain, and deprive the enemy of the succours which they were constantly deriving from the English vessels. Macdonald was to command the covering force, while to Suchet was given the immediate direction of the attacking army.¹

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¹ Jom. iii.
444, 445.
Nap. iv. 7,
9. Tor. iii.
312, 315.

But although active operations were thus resolved on in the eastern provinces, and the two French marshals, after leaving a sufficient number in garrison, could bring nearly sixty thousand excellent troops into the field, yet it was no easy task which awaited them in executing the commands of the Emperor. The Spaniards in Catalonia, under O'Donnell and Campoverde, were above twenty thousand strong, and this force was capable of being increased to double the amount for a particular enterprise, by the concourse of the peasants, all of whom were armed, and to whom dire necessity had taught the art of quitting their houses, and taking refuge in the hills on the approach of the enemy. The upper valleys in Aragon and Catalonia were entirely in the hands of the Spaniards; and, descending from their mountain fastnesses, where, from the absence of roads, pursuit was hardly practicable, they alike straitened Suchet's quarters in the former province, and threatened Macdonald's communication with Barcelona in the latter. Though the road from Gerona to that capital was only forty miles long, it was highly dangerous from the number of narrow defiles with which it abounded, and the many rivers it had to cross; and so formidable were the armed bands who hung upon its flank, that the re-victualling of the fortress, which was kept in a constant state of blockade by the patriots, required a covering force of eight or ten thousand men. To add to the difficulties of the French generals, the battering train for the reduction of Tarragona

51.
Forces and
dispositions
of the Span-
iards in
Catalonia.

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¹ Tor. iii. 312,
313. Nap. iv.
10, 12.
Suchet, i.
173, 176.
Viet et Conq.
xx. 53, 54.

was preparing at Toulon, and required to come from France. Its transport by sea was impossible, from the vigilance of the British cruisers; and conveyance by land along the sea-coast was both difficult and dangerous, from the vicinity of so many valleys issuing upon it, swarming with armed men. Even if these were successfully passed, the ridge of mountains which separated the neighbourhood of Barcelona from Tortosa and the valley of the Ebro, was in the hands of the Somatenes, and its principal passes, the Col de Balaguer and the Col del Alba, were strongly guarded by detachments of regular troops. At the same time the neighbouring fortress of Tarragona, which the Spaniards had materially strengthened, and from whence ample supplies by sea could be obtained, formed an advantageous base for their defensive operations.¹

52.
Macdonald's
first opera-
tions in Cata-
lonia.
May 15.

When Macdonald succeeded Augereau in the command of the army in northern Catalonia, he found the troops in a state of frightful insubordination, carrying on war in a most inhuman manner, and inflicting on and receiving from the unhappy peasants every species of atrocity—the sad bequests of the cruelty and violence of his predecessor. His first care was, by the establishment of discipline, to endeavour to bring them back to more humane habits, and greater regularity of conduct; but the injuries given and received on each side were too recent, the mutual exasperation too violent, to enable him to restore the contest to the usages of civilised war. It was still a war of extermination, and conducted on both sides with the utmost exasperation. Having in some degree, however, by a wholesome severity, restored the discipline of his own troops, he undertook, in the middle of June, the re-victualling of Barcelona, which was hard pressed for provisions: and though, by the aid of a covering force of ten thousand men, he succeeded in his object, yet such were the delays occasioned to his movements by the incessant attacks of the Somatenes, that his provisions were nearly half exhausted when he reached that city; and he himself was obliged to return with his empty carts, the very next day, to the neighbourhood of Gerona. In July he collected another convoy to relieve the again famishing city: forced the Garriga pass

June 10.

July 16:

on the 18th, and entered Barcelona that night. Early in August he again set out with a third convoy, which he also delivered in safety in that fortress: and finding that the northern parts of the province were entirely exhausted by these repeated requisitions, he now moved to the southward, forced the pass of Ordal with sixteen thousand men, and established himself for a few days at Reuss, in the middle of a little plain near Tarragona, while Campoverde, with the main body of the Spanish forces, withdrew under the cannon of that fortress. Finding, however, that the resources of Reuss and its vicinity were soon exhausted, and that the Spanish irregulars were drawing round him in all directions, and straitening his foraging parties, he again broke up: and, after making a feint towards the Col de Balaguer, turned sharp to the left, and, overthrowing all opposition, penetrated through the defile of Mont Blanch, and, descending into the plain of Urgel, entered into communication with Suchet, who lay at Lerida, in that vicinity, busily engaged in preparations for the siege of Tortosa.¹

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Aug. 8.

Aug. 16.

¹ Vict. et
Conq. xx.
54, 55, and
136. Nap. iv.
19, 21. Belm.
i. 150. Such.
i. 195, 196.
Vacant, 84,
92.

O'Donnell no sooner learned that Macdonald, with a considerable part of his forces, had crossed the mountains, and taken up his quarters in the neighbourhood of Lerida, than he formed the design of surprising some of the French troops which were left scattered in the Ampurdan and the northern parts of Catalonia. This bold design he executed with a vigour, skill, and secrecy, worthy of the very highest admiration. Shrouding his plans in profound darkness, he set out with a chosen body of six thousand men, and proceeded by forced marches towards Upper Catalonia. Leaving Barcelona and Hostalrich to the right, spreading contradictory reports wherever he went of his destination, proceeding by horse-tracks only through the hills, and swelling his column as he advanced by the numerous bands of armed peasants on his road, he fell with an overwhelming force on Schwartz's brigade, cantoned at La Bisbal, three quarters of a league from Gerona, totally defeated it, and made the whole, twelve hundred strong, prisoners. Actively following up his success, he next surprised and captured the whole French detachments on the

53.
Brilliant suc-
cess of
O'Donnell in
the north of
Catalonia.

Sept. 6.

Sept. 14.

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coasts towards Palamos: and fifteen hundred prisoners were embarked at that harbour for Tarragona, where they arrived in safety. The success, however, was dearly purchased by a severe wound which the brave O'Donnell received at Bisbal, which obliged him to return with part of his force by sea to Tarragona, where he was received by the population in transports as a deliverer. But he left sufficient forces under Campoverde to sustain the war in the Ampurdan, which soon became so formidable that it induced Napoleon to send strong reinforcements from Perpignan to Gerona, in the end of October, while thirty thousand fresh troops entered Navarre from France at the same period.¹

¹ Nap. iv. 21,
24. Behn. i.
151. Tor. iii.
391, 392.
Vacani, 96,
99.

54.
Repulse of
Macdonald
at Cardona,
and his re-
treat to
Gerona.

Severely mortified by this disaster, which reflected as much discredit on the vigilance of his own officers as it did lustre on the skill and audacity of the enemy, Macdonald felt the necessity of retracing his steps to northern Catalonia; and while on his march there, sought to take his revenge by an attack on Cardona, where Campoverde had stationed himself with a considerable part of his forces, and where the local junta of Upper Catalonia had taken refuge when driven from Solsona, their usual place of assembly. In the attack on the latter town, the magnificent cathedral took fire, and, burning all night, fell with a frightful crash that froze with horror every heart that heard it; while the mountains around were illuminated to their summits by the awful conflagration. Cardona itself stands at the foot of a rugged hill, which is the last of an offshoot from the great mountain range that divides eastern from western Catalonia, and a strong castle frowned on a mountain above. On the slope between the town and this stronghold the Spanish army was drawn up in an admirable position, and presented so formidable an aspect that Macdonald at first hesitated to attack it; but while he was deliberating, his advanced guard engaged without orders, and he was obliged to bring up his main body to its support. Neither, however, were able to make any impression; the French columns were driven back down the hill in disorder, and after losing some hundred men Macdonald drew off, and resumed his march to Gerona, which he reached in the beginning of November. There, however, he

Oct. 21.

found the country so utterly exhausted as to be incapable of furnishing subsistence for so great a number of troops; and as Barcelona was again reduced to extremity by want of provisions,* he left fourteen thousand men under Baraguay d'Hilliers in the Ampurdan to maintain the communication with France, himself set out with sixteen thousand more, and the convoy collected in Perpignan for its relief, and after some fighting succeeded in re-victualling the fortress a fourth time. After which, again moving to the southward, he took a position near Mont Blanch, rather in the condition of a straitened and defeated than a victorious and relieving force.¹

While Macdonald was thus painfully maintaining his ground in upper Catalonia, without the forty thousand men under his command making any material progress in the subjugation or pacification of the country, Suchet was busily engaged in preparations for the siege of Tortosa. To effect this, however, was a very tedious and difficult undertaking, for the strength of the enemy's forces in the intervening country rendered the transport of the battering train from Gerona and the French frontier impossible; and it required to be collected in Aragon, and conveyed in boats down the Ebro to the destined points, where the banks were in great part in the enemy's hands. Macdonald's approach to the plain of Urgel rather increased than diminished his difficulties; for the unlooked-for accumulation of force speedily exhausted the resources of the country, without affording any protection from the Somatenes to counterbalance that disadvantage. The financial difficulties of the French general were much augmented at this period by a peremptory order received from Napoleon to burn the whole English goods found in the province—an order which, however ill-timed and disastrous, he was obliged, after making the most vigorous remonstrances,² to carry into

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Nov. 27.

¹ Nap. iv.
25, 28.
Tor. iii. 321,
322. Vict. et
Cong. xx.
139, 141.

55.
Suchet's ex-
ertions pre-
paratory to
the siege of
Tortosa.

Sept. 1810.

² Nap. iv.
30, 32. Belm.
i. 151.
Suchet, i.
280, 284.

* Such was the extremity to which Barcelona was reduced at this period by the vigilant blockade kept up by the Catalonians on land, and the English at sea, that Macdonald, on 28th October, wrote to Suchet—"The Governor of Barcelona has announced to me the immediate departure of a convoy from Perpignan on 4th November, and urges me in the strongest manner to protect its advance. If that convoy is taken or dispersed, Barcelona will be lost: and it is not doubtful that the enemy will try every method to intercept it. My presence alone can save it; and you will easily understand, that even if the chances of success are equally balanced, we can never permit, without effort to avert it, such a loss, which would be irreparable."—MACDONALD to SUCHET, 28th October 1810; SUCHET'S *Mem.*, i. 206.

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complete execution, by publicly committing to the flames the British manufactures found in the province, in the great square of Saragossa. British colonial produce, by great exertions, escaped only by paying a duty of fifty per cent.

56.
His extraor-
dinary finan-
cial diffi-
culties.

This rigorous measure entirely ruined the merchants of the province; and the only resources which the French general had at his command to meet his enormous expenses, were those which he derived from the plain of Aragon, for great part of its mountain districts was in the hands of the guerillas. Nevertheless, though well aware of these facts, Napoleon, following out his usual system of making war maintain war, had thrown him entirely on his own province for the whole expenses of his corps and military operations.* Such was the influence, however, of the vigorous government and able administration of Suchet, that under the protection of his power, industry by degrees resumed its exertions, and, though the taxes were extremely severe, comparative contentment prevailed. And so great was the dexterity in extracting the resources from a country which long practice had given to the French generals and authorities, that from the ruined capital and wasted province of Aragon, they contrived to extort no less than eight millions of francs (£320,000) annually, for the pay of the troops alone, besides a much greater sum for their maintenance and operations,† although it had never paid four millions of francs in taxes in all to government, in the most flourishing and pacific days of the Spanish monarchy.¹

¹ Suchet, i.
280, 286, 306.
Nap. iv. 30.
32. South. v.
257, 258.
Belu, i. 151.

Although a sort of nominal blockade of Tortosa had been kept up since the middle of August, yet it was not till the beginning of November that the operations before it were seriously prosecuted; the waters of the Ebro being

* "The Governor of Aragon, Marshal Suchet, is charged with the administration of the police, of public justice, and of the finances. He will nominate to all public employments, and make all the requisite regulations. All the revenues of Aragon, as well ordinary as extraordinary, shall be paid over to the French paymaster, for the payment of the troops, and the charges of their maintenance. As a consequence of this, from the 1st March 1810, the French Treasury will cease to remit any funds for the service of the troops stationed in the whole extent of that government."—*Decree, 8th Feb. 1810; Moniteur, 9th Feb.*; and *SUCHET'S Memoirs*, i. 365. This decree is a specimen and sample of the whole military government of Napoleon.

† In the six months preceding the siege of Tortosa, Suchet had levied in Aragon 120,000 sheep and 1200 oxen.—*SUCHET*, i. 313.

too shallow in the autumnal months, from the drought of summer, to permit the heavy boats laden with the siege equipage to drop down from Saragossa to the lower parts of the river. Meanwhile, the Spanish guerilla parties were indefatigable in their efforts to impede the progress of the navigation; several French parties despatched to clear the banks were surprised and cut to pieces; and, on one occasion, a whole Neapolitan battalion was made prisoners. Early in November, however, the waters had risen sufficiently to enable the flotilla bearing the battering train and other siege apparatus, which had been so long in preparation, to drop down the stream; and though some of the boats were stranded, and severe fighting was necessary to clear the banks of the enemy, yet a sufficient number reached the neighbourhood of Tortosa to enable Suchet to commence the siege. Macdonald, at the same time, approached from the north to aid in the operations; and to facilitate his advance, Suchet attacked the Spanish troops at Falset, who obstructed the communication between the two armies, and after a short conflict put them to the rout with considerable loss. Meanwhile General Bassecour, who, with the Valencian troops, lay on the right bank of the Ebro, and who took advantage of the absence of the general-in-chief with the main body of the French forces on the left bank, to make an attack on the covering force near Uldecona, was defeated in two engagements, with the loss of three thousand men, and forced to take shelter within the walls of Peniscola. These important successes in a great measure secured the rear of the besieging force, and materially extended the district from which their resources were to be drawn; but such was the perseverance of the Spaniards, and the unconquerable spirit with which hostility sprang up in one place when extinguished in another, that the flotillas on the river were still exposed to attack, and a considerable convoy descending the stream was saved from destruction only by the sacrifice of the covering party, some hundreds strong, ashore. Notwithstanding all their vigilance, however, the French generals were drawing their forces, as well as accumulating their means of prosecuting the siege, around the fortress.¹ Suchet had

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57.

Commence-
ment of the
siege of Tor-
tosa. Nov.
1810.

Nov. 19.

Nov. 26.

1 Nap. iv.
32, 35.
Suchet, i.
517, 224.
Tor. iii. 325,
327. Vict. et
Cong. xx.
143, 144.
Belm. iii.
415, 419.

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twenty thousand men encamped under its walls ; while Macdonald, having re-victualled Barcelona, and raised its garrison to six thousand men, and left Baraguax D'Hilliers with fourteen thousand at Gerona, drew near with fifteen thousand excellent troops to cover the siege.

58.
Description
of Tortosa.

TORTOSA, lying at the mouth of the Ebro, and in part resting on a ridge of rocky heights, which in that quarter approach close to the river, seems to form the bond of communication between the mountains of Catalonia and the waters of the river. The town itself is situated on the northern or left bank, and its chief defence consisted in the strong fortifications which crowned the crest of the rugged heights that rise from thence towards the mountains that lie to the northward. The communication with the opposite bank was by a bridge of boats, the southern extremity of which was covered by a regular *tête-du-pont*. The works on the left bank, running up broken ridges and across precipitous ravines, were extremely irregular, and formidable rather from the depth of the precipices and obstacles of the ground, than the strength of the battlements with which these were surmounted. A hornwork, called the Tenasas, perched on a height beyond the northern suburb, and a lunette, bearing the name of Orleans, constructed to cover the point where the Duke of Orleans had carried the place during the war of the Succession, constituted its principal outworks on the left bank of the river. The garrison consisted of eight thousand men ; the inhabitants, ten thousand more, of whom two thousand bore arms, were animated by the best spirit ; and both from the strength of the works, and the importance of its position, commanding the only bridge over the Ebro from Saragossa to the sea, this fortress was justly regarded as the key of all southern Catalonia.¹

¹ Suchet, i. 225, 227.
Nap. iv. 36,
38. Belm. iii. 419, 420.

59.
Siege of Tor-
tosa.

Six thousand of Macdonald's men were placed under the command of Suchet, while he himself with the remainder, ten thousand strong, took his station in the passes of the hills, in such a manner as to interrupt the approach of any Spaniards from Tarragona, where the bulk of their forces was placed. But the defence made by Tortosa was noways commensurate either to its ancient reputation, or to the present efforts which had been made for its reduction. The investment having been

completed, the whole enemy's posts were driven in on the 19th December; and on the following night ground was broken before the fortress. With such vigour were the operations of the besiegers conducted, and so negligently those of the defence, that in the short space of a week the besiegers were safely lodged in the covered way, and on the following day a sally was repulsed with much slaughter. On the night of the 26th the batteries were armed with forty-five pieces of heavy artillery, from which, at daybreak on the following morning, a heavy fire was opened upon the Spanish ramparts. In two days the works were sensibly injured, the bridge to the southern bank of the river was broken, and the *tête-du-pont* on that bank abandoned by the besieged. In the night of the 31st, the besiegers' guns were brought up to the edge of the counterscarp, and the miners had effected a lodgement in the rampart; but the mine was not yet fired, no practicable breach had been effected, and the garrison and armed citizens, still above nine thousand strong, might have prolonged for a considerable time a glorious defence.¹

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Dec. 19.

Dec. 26.

1 Tor. iv. 98
101. Helm.
iii. 434, 440.
Suchet, i.
233, 246.
Nap. iv. 42,
44.

The governor Alacha, however, was a weak man, wholly destitute of the resolution requisite for such a situation; his imagination was haunted by the terrors of a mine exploded, and the enemy rushing in through a defenceless breach; and at seven o'clock in the evening he hoisted the white flag on the bastion chiefly threatened. Meanwhile he had recourse to the usual resource of irresolute men—a council of war; but it, as might have been expected, decided nothing, and left him in greater perplexity than before. The officers, however, of the garrison, indignant at the pusillanimous capitulation which was in contemplation, loudly remonstrated against the proposed surrender, and in fact almost shook off the governor's authority. But in the night, the artillery of the besiegers thundered with powerful effect on the rampart from the opposite side of the ditch; in the morning two practicable breaches were made in it, and an immediate assault was commanded. Upon this three white flags were displayed in different parts of the city; and Suchet, perceiving that the governor's authority was not generally obeyed, rode up to the principal gate,

60.
Fall of the
place.
Jan. 2, 1811.

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1811.

informed the sentinels that hostilities had ceased, and desired to be instantly conducted to the governor in the citadel. He found him surrounded by his officers, who were vehemently protesting against a capitulation, and contending for a renewal of hostilities. But such was the ascendant speedily obtained by the stern manner and undaunted bearing of the French general, that the governor was overawed ; none of his officers could undertake the responsibility, at so awful a moment, of revolting openly against his authority, and the place was surrendered at discretion. The garrison, still seven thousand strong, laid down their arms. There were found in the place one hundred and eighty pieces of cannon, thirty thousand bombs and cannon-balls, and one hundred and fifty thousand pounds of powder.¹

¹ Belm. iii.
441, 443.
Suchet, i.
245, 249.
Nap. iv. 44,
45. Tor. iii.
99, 102.

61.
Important
consequences
of the fall of
Tortosa.
Jan. 9.

Suchet took steps, without any delay, to improve to the uttermost the immense advantage thus gained. An expedition was immediately fitted out from the fallen city against the Col de Balaguer, a fort commanding the pass over the mountains of the same name between Tortosa and Tarragona ; and this important stronghold was carried by escalade. This easy conquest gave him the means of directing his forces, at pleasure, either against the latter of these cities, the seat of government and the great bulwark of the Spaniards in the province, or against the valleys still held by their arms in the north of Catalonia ; while the possession of the only bridge over the Lower Ebro entirely severed the patriots in Catalonia from those in Valencia, and laid open the rich plains and hitherto untouched fields of the latter province to the French incursions. At the same time, the fort of La Rapita, on the sea-coast near the mouth of the Ebro, and the mouth of that river itself, fell into the hands of the French ; and the Valencians and Catalonians, finding themselves entirely severed from each other, and separately menaced with an attack, gave up all thoughts of combined operations, and severally prepared, to the best of their power, to meet the storm about to fall on their heads. Macdonald, however, in the course of his march from the neighbourhood of Barcelona to Lerida, whither he was directing his course in order to concert measures with Suchet for the investment of Tarragona,

Jan. 13.

Jan. 15.

had to sustain a rude conflict, in the defile of Valls, with the troops of Sarsfield, while the garrison of Tarragona, under Campoverde, assailed his rear. The latter were defeated and driven back into the place; but the Italian division of Eugene was so severely handled by the former, as to be at first defeated with severe loss; and it only forced the passage by a sudden onset during the night, when the pass was at last cleared, and Macdonald succeeded in reaching Lerida. Notwithstanding this partial success, the cause of the Peninsula could not have received a severer blow than by the unlooked-for and discreditable fall of the important fortress of Tortosa; and to it may immediately be ascribed the long train of disasters which ensued in the east of Spain, and which, if not counterbalanced by the extraordinary successes simultaneously gained by the English in the west, would have permanently riveted the fetters of French despotism around the neck of the Spanish nation.¹

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¹ Jom. iii.
448. Nap. iv.
45. Suchet, i.
253, 254.
Tor. iv. 108.
Vict. et Conq.
xx. 297, 300.

After the fall of Tortosa, Suchet was engaged for several months in preparations for the most arduous undertaking which now remained in the Peninsula—the siege of Tarragona, the strongest fortress, except Cadiz, still in the hands of the Spaniards—the seat of government, the arsenal of their power, and in an especial manner valuable from its capacious harbour, which afforded ample means of communicating by sea with the English fleet. The city, however, was so powerful, that great preparations, and no small concentration of force, were required for its reduction. In order to prepare for it, Suchet returned to Saragossa, where he devoted himself for some months to the internal concerns of his province, and the collecting provisions for his army; while General Guillemillot, chief of the staff to Macdonald, joined him in that city to arrange joint measures for the important enterprise. So inadequate, however, did all the means which they possessed appear, that Guillemillot was despatched to Paris in the name of both generals to solicit succours, and the means of pushing the siege with vigour. But Napoleon, who by this time was actively engaged in preparations for the Russian war, informed them that they must not look to him for assistance, and that they had ample means at their disposal to effect their object. He directed that the

62.
Preparations
for the siege
of Tarragona.

March 18.

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army of Aragon should form the besieging, and that of Catalonia the covering force; that the siege equipage and artillery should be drawn from the ramparts of Lerida and Tortosa; and that Suchet's force, which was much weakened by its active operations, should be reinforced by two divisions of the army of Macdonald, numbering seventeen thousand men. Notwithstanding this copious draft, the hero of Wagram had still nearly thirty thousand men under his banners, of whom, however, only one-half could be spared from occupying the Ampurdan, and the arduous duty of keeping open the communication between Barcelona and France.¹

¹ Jom. iii.
516, 517.
Nap. iii. 46,
51. Suchet,
ii. 308, 313.

63.
Renewed
vigour of the
Catalonians
in the war.

The contest in Catalonia during the whole Peninsular contest was of a very peculiar kind, and more nearly resembled the varied adventures and balanced successes of the wars of the League in France, or of the Succession in Spain, than the fierce and irresistible onsets which characterised in other quarters the wars of the French Revolution. Exhaustion and lassitude followed every considerable achievement; and the enemy never appeared so formidable as after reverses that presaged his ruin. This was the natural consequence of the strong country which the Spaniards occupied, of the tenacious spirit by which they were animated, and of the parsimonious policy of Napoleon, which denied to his generals in every province all pecuniary assistance excepting such as they could derive from the province itself. A striking example of this peculiarity in the contest, occurred immediately after the fall of Tortosa. While all Europe imagined that so decisive a blow was to terminate the war in the east of the Peninsula, and that Catalonia and Valencia, now severed from each other, would separately fall an easy prey to the victor, the gallant Spaniards of the former province, nothing daunted, were preparing to wrest its most important fortresses from the enemy; and, though baffled in one of their enterprises, they succeeded in making themselves masters of the key of the eastern Pyrenees.²

² Jom. iii.
517. Nap. iii.
48, 49.

Barcelona was the first object of their attack. Early in March Campoverde assembled eight thousand men at Molinos del Rey, and seven thousand at Igualada and the neighbouring villages; and having secret intelligence

with the inhabitants of Monjuich, the citadel of that fortress, who promised to aid him in the attempt, he deemed himself secure of success. Late on the night of the 29th March, he arrived close to the walls, and a column of grenadiers descended into the ditch. General Maurice Mathieu, the French governor, had, however, accurate intelligence of all that was going forward: the ramparts were lined with armed men; and so terrible a fire was speedily opened on the head of the column, that great numbers fell on the spot, and the remainder who had not crossed the crest of the glacis, finding the design discovered, retired hastily and abandoned the attempt. Far from being discouraged by this failure, a similar enterprise was shortly after undertaken against Figueras, and crowned with complete success. A leader of the Miquelets, named Martinez, having ascertained that the governor of this important fortress kept a very negligent look-out, and that the garrison, not two thousand strong, trusted entirely to the strength of the ramparts for their defence, formed the design, with the aid of some citizens in the town, of surprising the gates. Late on the evening of the 9th April, he descended from the mountains, and as soon as it was dark sent his advanced guard under Rovira, seven hundred strong, close to the ramparts. The citizens inside, with whom the plan was concerted, immediately opened the postern; the Spaniards rushed in and disarmed the guard; and so rapidly did Martinez, with the main body of his forces, follow on their footsteps, that, before the astonished Italians could make any preparations for their defence, the gates were all in possession of the enemy, the arsenals taken, and the whole garrison made prisoners. Thirty men only were killed or wounded in this brilliant exploit; the governor and seventeen hundred men were taken; a few hundred made their escape to Gerona, where they arrived in great dismay early in the morning; while the Somatenes of the neighbouring hills, among whom the news spread like wildfire, made the most incredible exertions, before the French could re-invest the place, to throw in supplies of men and provisions.¹

This important advantage, which seemed to counterbalance the fall of Tortosa, and, if it had been adequately

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64.
Attempt to
surprise Bar-
celona, and
capture of
Figueras by
the Span-
iards.
March 23.

April 10.
¹ Tor. iv. 118.
119. Nap. iv.
60, 62. Vict.
et Conq. xx.
304, 308.

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65.

Immense joy
which this
success ex-
cited in Spain.

supported, unquestionably would have done so, excited the most enthusiastic transports throughout all Spain. Crowds of Miquelets, fully equipped and burning with ardour, crowded round the standards of Campoverde and Sarsfield: and from all quarters bands of armed men converged towards Figueras to raise the blockade, re-victual the fortress, and preserve the eastern key of the Peninsula for the arms of the monarchy. *Te Deum* was sung in all the churches of the Peninsula not under the immediate control of the enemy. The general transports knew no bounds. But while the people were giving themselves up to excusable congratulations on this auspicious event, the French generals were busily engaged in taking measures to render it of no avail to the enemy. Baraguay D'Hilliers immediately drew out all the forces he could collect from Gerona and the neighbouring forts, and closely blockaded the fortress, in the hope of compelling it to surrender, from want of provisions, before any succours could be thrown in by the enemy. The Spaniards, however, on their part were not idle; and Campoverde speedily approached from the side of Taragona, at the head of eight thousand infantry and twelve hundred horse, bringing with them a great convoy of ammunition and provisions.¹

¹ Tor. iv. 121,
122. Nap. iv.
62, 63. Vict.
et Conq. xx.
308, 312.

66.

Unsuccessful
attempt of
Campoverde
to relieve the
place.

But all his efforts to relieve the place proved unsuccessful. Early in May he made his appearance before the besiegers' stations; and so completely had the design been concealed from the French generals that, at the point where the heads of his columns appeared, there was only a single battalion ready for action, while the Baron D'Erolles threatened the besiegers on the other side by a sally from the citadel; and if the Spanish commander had instantly commenced the attack, the French historians admit he would easily have accomplished his object. The French general, in this extremity, had recourse to an artifice, and announced to Sarsfield the conclusion of an armistice with a view to a capitulation. He fell into the snare, and consented at the critical moment to a suspension of arms. Meanwhile, urgent messengers were despatched for succour; and when hostilities were resumed the period for complete success had passed. As it was, the head of Sarsfield's

column, after overthrowing all opposition, penetrated into the town, and fifteen hundred men with some provisions succeeded in reinforcing the garrison. But Baraguay D'Hilliers, alarmed by the fire of musketry, and now aware of the real point of attack, hastened with a choice body of four thousand men to the spot, and assailing the Spaniards in flank, while scattered over several miles of road, and in part involved in the streets of the suburbs, won an easy victory. Eleven hundred men were lost to the Spaniards in this affair, and the remainder were driven to a distance from the beleaguered fortress; and though the French loss was nearly as great, yet they might with reason congratulate themselves on the success of their defence, as the provisions thrown into the place bore no proportion to the additional mouths introduced. After the defeat of Sarsfield the blockading columns quietly resumed their stations on the hills around its walls.¹

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Macdonald was engaged during these operations in northern Catalonia in an enterprise which has afforded ground for the only imputation cast upon him. After the departure of Suchet for Saragossa, consequent on the fall of Tortosa, the marshal had set out from Lerida for Barcelona, not by the direct road of Igualada, which was occupied in force by Sarsfield, but by the circuitous route of Manresa. Sarsfield, apprised of his intentions, lay in the rocky heights in the neighbourhood of Mont Serrat, to assail him in the march. The Italians, who formed the head of the column, encountered a severe opposition at the bridge of Manresa, which was strongly barricaded; but, having forced their way through, they with wanton barbarity set fire to the town, though it had made no resistance, and was almost entirely deserted by its inhabitants, and even tore the wounded Spaniards from the hospital. The flames, spreading with frightful rapidity, soon reduced seven hundred houses to ashes, among which were two orphan hospitals, and several other noble establishments both of industry and beneficence. Macdonald, who witnessed the conflagration from the heights of Culla, at a short distance,² was so situated as to be unable to render any effectual aid in extinguishing the

¹ Vict. et
Conq. xx.
308, 311.
Tor. iv. 121,
123. Nap. iv.
62, 63.

67.
Burning and
fight of
Manresa.
March 29.

² Nap. iv.
56, 57. South.
v. 260. Tor.
iv. 115, 116.
Vict. et Conq.
xx. 304, 307.

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68.
Successful at-
tack made by
Sarsfield on
the French
rearguard.

flames; and the smoking ruins remained to attest where a French marshal's army had passed the night.

But the wanton act of barbarity on the part of Macdonald's men was quickly and condignly avenged. The inhabitants of all the neighbouring hills, struck by the prodigious light which, through the whole night, illuminated the heavens, hastened at daybreak to the scene of devastation, and, wrought up to the highest pitch by the sight of the burning dwellings, fell with irresistible fury on the French rearguard as it was defiling out of the town; while Sarsfield himself assailed the long column of march in flank, when scattered over several leagues of woody and rocky defiles, and before Macdonald reached Barcelona he had sustained a loss of a thousand men. The unnecessary cruelty of this conflagration excited the utmost indignation, not only in Catalonia, but throughout the whole of Spain. The war assumed a character of vengeful atrocity hitherto unknown; and the Spanish generals, justly indignant at such a wanton violation alike of the usages of war and the convention till now observed in Catalonia, issued a proclamation directing no quarter to be given to the French troops in the neighbourhood of any town which should be delivered over to the flames:^{1*}

¹ Tor. iv. 115,
116. Vict. et
Conq. xx.
304, 307.
Nap. iv. 58,
57. South. v.
260, 261.

69.
Suchet's
reasons for
persisting in
the siege of
Tarragona.

Macdonald was so disconcerted by this disaster, and the fall of Figueras, which in the highest degree excited the displeasure of the Emperor, that he earnestly entreated Suchet to lay aside for the present all thoughts of the siege of Tarragona, and unite all his disposable forces with those of the army of northern Catalonia, for the purpose of regaining the most important fortress in eastern Spain for the French arms. But that general, who was intent on the reduction of the great stronghold of the patriots in that quarter, was not to be diverted from his object; and since Macdonald professed his inability to

* "The conduct of Marshal Macdonald has been equally unworthy of his rank as a French duke and marshal, and his station as a general of civilised armies. Not content with reducing to ashes a defenceless city, which was making no resistance, he has not even respected the asylum of wounded soldiers, and has violated the sacred contract concluded between the hostile armies, and acted upon since the commencement of the war." — CAMPOVERDE'S *Proclamation*, 5th April, 1811; TORENO, iv. p. 116. The author, however, is satisfied from documents placed in his hands by Marshal Macdonald's family, since the first edition of this work was published, that that able officer had not the means of stopping the fire; and that, however deplorable the calamity, it was one of the casualties of war, which did not detract from the well-earned fame of that noble warrior.

render him any assistance, he resolved to undertake the enterprise alone, with the aid only of the latter marshal's two divisions which were placed under his orders. He replied, therefore, to the requisition of his colleague for aid in the blockade of Figueras, "That a simple blockade might be established by the nearest troops; while to accumulate great forces on so sterile a spot would, without accelerating the surrender, transfer the difficulties of finding subsistence to the besieging force; that it was by no means reasonable to renounce the attack on Tarragona, the only remaining bulwark of Catalonia, at the very moment of execution, because of the loss of a fort; that it was in Tarragona that the greatest number of the Spanish forces in the province were shut up, and it was there only that they could be made prisoners. Eighteen thousand had already been captured in Lerida, Mequinenza, and Tortosa, and if ten or twelve thousand more were taken in Tarragona, the strength of Catalonia would be entirely broken. It was more than ever expedient to press this great operation, as that fortress, stripped of a large portion of its defenders, who had been sent to the relief of Figueras, would fall more easily than under any other circumstances could be expected."¹

TARRAGONA, which Suchet, in obedience not less to the express injunctions of the Emperor, than the dictates of sound policy on the subject, was now seriously resolved to besiege, is a city of great antiquity, and has been celebrated from the earliest times in the wars of the Peninsula. The Tarraco of the ancients, it was the capital in the time of the Romans of Cisterior Spain: though sunk from its pristine magnificence, it still retained many remains of former splendour; and great part of the rampart which still encircled its edifices, had been erected by the hands of the legions. The town consists of a rectangular parallelogram, the northern part of which is perched on a rocky eminence, of which the eastern base is washed by the waves of the Mediterranean. The lower town is situated at the southwest of the rectangle, on the banks of the Francoli, which glides in a gentle current into the sea; and the whole inhabitants did not, at the time of which we speak, exceed eleven thousand souls, though nearly an equal number of armed men had, ever since the

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April 26.

¹ Suchet, Men. ii. 16, 17. Nap. iv. 63, 64. Tor. iv. 122, 123.

70.
Description
of Tarragona.

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² Nap. iv.
70, 71. Tor.
iv. 125, 126.
Suchet, ii.
35, 36.

commencement of the war, been there assembled around the ruling junta of Catalonia. The garrison, however, as Suchet had foreseen, had been so much reduced by the large expeditions fitted out under Campoverde for the relief of Figueras, that, when the French appeared before the place in the beginning of May, it did not consist of more than six thousand men, including twelve hundred armed inhabitants, and the seamen of the port.²

71.
Its fortifica-
tions and
means of
defence.

The principal defence of the place on the north-east, where the great road to Barcelona entered its walls, consisted in a line of redoubts connected by a curtain, with a ditch and covered way, running from the sea to the rocks on which the upper town is built; and behind this exterior line there was a rocky space called the Milagro, lying between the castellated cliffs of the upper town and the sea. The approach to the city on the south-east, where the Francolí flowed in a sluggish current into the sea, is perfectly flat; and as that side appeared least protected by nature, a newly constructed line of fortifications had been erected both towards the sea and the river; in the interior of which a fort, termed the Fort Royal, formed a sort of citadel to the lower part of the city. The upper town, which both by nature and art was much the strongest part of the fortress, was separated by a complete rampart from the lower, and communicated, by an old aqueduct which brought water to the city, with Fort Olivo, a large outwork eight hundred yards distant, built on a rocky eminence from which the place might have been commanded. The place was, generally speaking, strong, chiefly from the rugged and inaccessible nature of the cliffs on which the greater part of its ramparts were built; but it had several weak points, especially on the southern side. The ample circuit of its walls required more than double the garrison within them to provide a proper defence; and though the English squadron of three sail of the line, under Commodore Codrington, in the bay, had a most imposing appearance, and might aid considerably in the defence, yet it could not be concealed that it could give but little support to the breaches, and that if the lower town were carried, the upper, thereby cut off from all communication with the harbour and the sea, would soon be forced to surrender.¹

¹ Suchet, ii.
35, 36. Nap.
iv. 70, 71.
Tor. iv. 125,
126.

Being aware what a desperate resistance he would encounter in assailing this important fortress, the last link which enabled the Catalonians to communicate with Cadiz, Valencia, and the rest of Spain, as well as with the British fleet, Suchet had taken extraordinary precautions for the success of the siege. Immense convoys had been collected in Aragon, which still retained its character of the granary of the army; the flourishing town of Reuss in the vicinity had been fortified, and contained his principal magazines; armed posts along the road in his rear, toward Saragossa, afforded points of protection for his supplies; and a considerable part of his army was scattered over their line of march, to repel the incursions of the Somatenes from the neighbouring hills. All things having, by great and long-continued exertions, been at last got in readiness, the French army moved forward, and approaching the fortress from the south, crossed the stream of the Francoli, and completed the investment on that side from the foot of the cliffs of Olivo to the sea. In doing so, however, they were exposed to a severe fire from the fort on the one side, and the English squadron on the other, by which in a short time two hundred men were struck down. But notwithstanding this loss, they succeeded in maintaining their ground, and next day repulsed a sortie by the garrison to drive them from it. The French had for the undertaking twenty thousand men, comprising the very best troops in the Peninsula, and a hundred pieces of cannon; but the Spanish garrison was receiving continual reinforcements by sea. Campoverde himself arrived with four thousand men on the 10th, and after reinforcing the garrison, again set sail to join his lieutenants in the attempt to raise the siege. Colonel Green soon afterwards made his appearance from Cadiz with considerable English stores, and fifty thousand dollars in money; while Sarsfield and D'Erolles resumed their former stations near Valls, Mont Blanch, and Igualada, to threaten the communications of the besieging force.¹

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72.

Commence-
ment of the
siege.

May 4.

May 5.

May 10.

¹ Belm. iii.
479, 483.Tor. iv. 127,
128. Suchet,
ii. 36, 45.

The attack of the besiegers being directed, in the first instance, against the southern front of the lower town, near the Francoli stream, they found themselves severely galled by the fire of Fort Olivo; and, on that account, soon felt the necessity of directing their operations, in the

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73.
Preparations
for storming
Fort Olivo.
May 18 to
22.

first place, against that formidable outwork. Several sallies by the besieged, in some of which nearly six thousand men were engaged, and which, though repulsed, seriously impeded his operations, convinced Suchet, at the same time, of the necessity of contracting his communications, and accumulating all the disposable forces he could command round the fortress, which was now defended by above twelve thousand soldiers. The fortified station on Mont Blanch, accordingly, was abandoned, and its garrison drawn in to reinforce the besiegers, the line of communication by Falset and Felipe de Balaguer being alone preserved open. Ground was broken before Fort Olivo on the 21st; but the vigorous fire of the Spanish batteries, and the extraordinary hardness of the soil, rendered the progress of the trenches extremely slow; and it was not till the 27th that thirteen guns were pushed so near as to be able to breach the place, and the 28th before the fire was opened. Notwithstanding the weight of metal with which it was attacked, the gunners of the fort replied with uncommon vigour, and little progress was made during the next day in breaching the ramparts; but, towards night, the engineers succeeded in blowing down the palisades which defended the junction of the aqueduct and wall, and left an entrance almost on a level with the ramparts. The breach was not yet practicable; but this ill-defended point afforded a hope of effecting an entrance, and the circumstances of the besiegers, and the increasing numbers and audacity of the Somatenes in their rear, as well as the general enthusiasm excited by the fall of Figueras, rendered it indispensable to hazard an immediate assault. It was therefore ordered for that very night: two chosen columns were selected for the attack: every man in the army, as well as the town, felt that on its success the fate of the siege, and probably of the war in Catalonia, would depend.¹

¹ Belm. iii. 494, and 497. Nap. iv. 76, 77. Tor. iv. 129, 130. Suchet, ii. 52, 55.

74.
It is carried
by storm.
May 29.

Four guns were discharged at nightfall as the signal for the assault; a variety of false attacks were immediately directed, with loud cheers and beating of drums, against the ramparts of the fortress, and the columns destined for the real assault of the breach and the aqueduct entrance of the fort, swiftly and silently advanced to their appointed posts. The Spaniards, distracted by the

fire and rolling of drums in every direction, and unable from the darkness to see the assailants, opened a fire from every rampart and bastion in the place: the vast circumference of Tarragona presented an undulating sheet of flame: every cliff, every salient angle, stood forth in bright illumination amidst the general gloom; while the English ships in the bay commenced a distant cannonade, which increased the grandeur of the spectacle, and threw flaming projectiles that streaked the firmament in every direction with flitting gleams of light. Amidst this awful scene the assaulting columns, shrouded in gloom, advanced bravely to the attack. That destined for the storming of the breach stumbled in the dark against a Spanish column, which was proceeding from the town to relieve the garrison of the fort; the two bodies, from the violence of the shock, soon were intermingled; and, in the confusion which ensued, some of the assailants got in at the gate opened to receive the succour; and, when it was closed, their comrades outside, now close to the walls, began to mount them by escalade. Meanwhile the other column was still more fortunate. The front ranks, indeed, who had descended into the fosse, found their scaling-ladders too short, and were soon swept away by the murderous fire from the rampart; but the aqueduct presented a bridge, narrow indeed, yet capable of being passed by resolute men, now that the palisades were blown down, and over this narrow ledge the Italian grenadiers made their way into the fort. Though the defences, however, were now penetrated in two different quarters, the brave garrison disdained to surrender: facing their enemies on the ramparts wherever they presented themselves, they still fought like lions: the cannoniers fell at their guns: the infantry perished in their ranks as they stood: and it was only by pouring in columns of fresh troops, who, as day dawned, mowed the heroic defenders down by concentric volleys on all sides, that the resistance was at length overcome. Two hundred of the assailants perished in this desperate assault: but the loss of the besieged was still greater, and nearly a thousand men were made prisoners, the remainder of the garrison having in desperation leaped from the ramparts and escaped into the city.¹

¹ Vacani,
124, 126.
Belm. iii. 497.
502. Suchet,
ii. 56, 60.
Tor. iv. 131,
132. Nap. iv.
78, 81.

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75.
Preparations
of the Span-
iards for a
protracted
defence.
May 31.

The loss of Fort Olivo was a severe discouragement to the Spaniards, as it had been generally considered impregnable, and contained ammunition and provisions for a long siege. Its fall was poorly compensated on the following day by the arrival of reinforcements to the amount of two thousand men, who came by sea from Minorca and Valencia. With their aid a sortie was attempted by three thousand men, to endeavour to regain the fort before the French had time to establish themselves in their conquest; but so rapid had been the dispositions of General Rogniat, who commanded the engineers, for its defence, that it was repulsed with loss. A council of war was upon this held in Tarragona, and it was decided that Campoverde should leave the place, and endeavour to rouse the mountaineers of Catalonia, who already mustered ten thousand strong in the neighbourhood of Valls, to raise the siege; while the command of the garrison was committed to Don Juan de Contreras, a brave man, who ably and faithfully executed the arduous trust committed to his charge. He immediately adopted the most energetic measures for the public defence; levied a heavy tax on the principal merchants, which replenished the military chest; and divided the whole inhabitants, without exception of age or sex, into companies, to whom various duties, according to their capacity, were assigned. The aged and the women were appointed to attend the wounded and prepare bandages, the children to carry water and ammunition to the troops, the men capable of supporting arms to reinforce the soldiers on the ramparts; while Commodore Codrington * materially aided the defence by continually landing fresh supplies of provisions and warlike stores, and removing the sick and wounded to the neighbouring and friendly harbour of Valencia.¹

¹ Such. ii. 61,
63. Belm. iii.
506, 507.
Tor. iv. 133,
134. Nap. iv.
79, 80.

Finding the garrison resolute in maintaining the defence, notwithstanding the disaster they had experienced, Suchet commenced his approaches in form against the lower town, on the side of the Francoli river. Sarsfield at the same time entered the fortress with reinforcements, and took the command in the menaced quarter.

* Now Admiral Sir Charles Codrington, who gained the glorious victory of Navarino.

The French engineers, by great exertion, had there established fifty pieces of heavy cannon in the trenches, which were gradually pushed forward to breaching distance, notwithstanding repeated sallies of the besieged. On the 7th June the fire commenced against Fort Francoli, and on the same night a lodgement was effected in that outwork, which forms the south-eastern angle of the fortress, close to the sea. By this means the besiegers gained the important advantage of closing the entrance of the harbour to the British fleet: but Codrington still kept up his communication with the town by means of the point of Milagro, which was beyond the reach of the guns from Francoli; and he soon after landed four thousand men from Valencia at Villa Novo, who made their way across the hills to Campoverde, who was now seriously preparing in their rear to disquiet the besiegers; while D'Erolles, near Falset, attacked and destroyed a valuable convoy on its route to their camp. Meanwhile, the garrison of Tarragona were so confident in their means of defence, that they despatched a body of horse out by the road to Barcelona, who broke through the French lines of investment, and succeeded in joining their comrades destined to raise the siege. Several gallant sorties also were made by the Spaniards from the lower town, some of which proved entirely successful, and sensibly retarded the approaches of the French, which were now directed against the Orleans bastion, still on the southern front of that part of the fortress.¹

These untoward events seriously alarmed Suchet for the event of the siege. The garrison of the fortress had now been augmented, by repeated succours by sea, to nearly seventeen thousand men; the losses of the defence were constantly supplied by fresh troops; his own besieging force was hardly of greater amount, when the losses it had sustained, already amounting to two thousand five hundred men, were taken into view; and fourteen thousand irregular troops, under Campoverde and Sarsfield, were assembled to threaten his communications and cut off his convoys. An ordinary general, in such circumstances, would have abandoned the undertaking. But Suchet was one of those remarkable characters who find resources in themselves to overcome even the most formidable obstacles.

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76.

Progress of
the siege, and
preparations
by the Spaniards to raise
it.

June 7.

June 15.

June 20.

1 Belm. iii.
512, 518.
Tor. iv. 135.
137. Nap. iv.
87, 89.
Suchet, ii.
63, 81.

77.

The ap-
proaches are
brought up
to the lower
town.

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He saw that the issue of the campaign was entirely centred in Tarragona; that the siege was a combat of life or death to the opposite parties; and he resolved, at all hazards, to persist in the attempt. Abandoning, therefore, all subordinate stations, and summoning to his aid four thousand additional troops from the rear, he concentrated all his efforts upon pushing forward the approaches, and keeping up the spirits of his men. Such, however, was the vigour of the Spanish fire, and the obstacles which they threw in the way by repeated sorties, that from sixty to a hundred men fell every day in the trenches; and it was evident that both the numbers and spirits of the soldiers would sink before so incessant a consumption, if it was of long endurance. At length, on the 21st June, three practicable breaches were declared in the rampart of the lower town, and the troops were directed to make ready for an assault.¹

¹ Suchet, ii. 80, 84. Belm. iii. 521, 525. Nap. iv. 88. Tor. iv. 137, 139.

78.
Assault of
the lower
town.
June 21.

At seven o'clock at night fifteen hundred chosen men were disposed in three columns, and, on a signal of four bombs discharged at once, advanced in silence, but with a swift and steady step, towards the breaches. The first column, under General Bouvion, rushed on rapidly to the breach of the Orleans bastion, which they were fortunate enough to surmount almost before they were perceived, and before the enemy had time to fire two mines which had been run under the ruined part of the wall. The Spaniards, surprised, were driven back to the gorge of the redoubt, where they stood firm, and arrested the assaulting column: but fresh troops pouring in, they were at length overcome, and the victors, hotly pursuing their advantage, made themselves masters of the whole works in the south-west angle of the lower town, and arrived at the foot of the rampart of Fort Royal. Meanwhile, the second column, whose attack was directed against the breach in the bastion of St Charles, near the sea-coast, met with a severe resistance, and its head was arrested on the breach; but Suchet no sooner perceived this than he ordered up a second body, which, pressing on immediately behind the first, fairly pushed it through the perilous pass, and the rampart was won. The whole bastions and walls of the lower town now swarmed with

the assailants; the Spaniards, without a leader, were thrown into confusion, and fled, some to the upper town, and some into the houses on the lower, where they were speedily pursued and massacred. The shouts of the victors, the cries of the vanquished, were heard on all sides; the warehouses near the harbour took fire, and soon filled the heavens with a prodigious flame; in the general confusion the vessels in the port cut their cables, and stood out to sea; while the English squadron increased the horrors of the scene by pouring their broadsides indiscriminately into the quays and ramparts, now crowded with the enemy's soldiers. In the midst of this frightful confusion, however, the assailants steadily pursued their advantage: amidst a terrific carnage, alike of soldiers and citizens, the besieged were driven entirely from their defences; Fort Royal itself was carried by escalade in the first tumult of victory; and when morning dawned the French were masters of the harbour and whole lower town: the principal warehouses were smoking in ruins; fifteen hundred Spaniards lay dead in the streets and on the breaches, besides five hundred French who had fallen in the assault; eighty heavy guns which stood on the ramparts were in the enemy's power; and the whole remaining hopes of Tarragona centred in the desperate multitude who crowded the walls of the upper town.¹

¹ Suchet, 85, 87. Belm. iii. 529, 531, Tor. iv. 137, 138. Nap. iv. 91.

But that multitude still presented an undaunted front to the enemy, and, amidst the ruin of all their hopes, still hoisted with mournful resolution the standard of independence. A flag of truce, displayed by Suchet the day after the successful assault, was sternly rejected. Loud were the clamours, however, which arose, both in the city and the adjoining province, against Campoverde, for his inactivity in not seriously attempting to raise the siege; and to such a height did the ferment arise after the fall of the lower town, that the Junta of Catalonia sent him positive orders at all hazards to attempt it. But though he had twelve thousand infantry and two thousand horse under his command, and the besieged had all their forces ready to co-operate on their side, nothing was done: the officer to whom the principal attack was intrusted was too timid to undertake it;

79.
Fruitless attempt to raise the siege, and arrival of succour from England.

June 24.

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June 26.

¹ Suchet, ii.
421. Nap. iv.
94, 95. Bolin.
iii. 531. Tor.
iv. 140.

and Campoverde himself, after a vain demonstration, drew off, leaving the garrison to its fate. Still, however, the besieged held out undismayed; and their spirits were elevated again to the highest pitch when, on the 26th, two thousand English from Cadiz, under Colonel Skerret, arrived in the bay. Loud and enthusiastic were the cheers of the excited multitude when the English commander, with his staff, landed and proceeded to the breach. The fall of Fort Olivo, the assault of the lower town, the terrors of Suchet, were forgotten, when the scarlet uniforms were seen traversing the streets.¹

80.
Failure of the
English to
lend assis-
tance.

But these generous and confiding hopes were miserably disappointed. The British officers, though brave and zealous, had not the true military genius; they did not see where the vital point of the war in the east of Spain was to be found. The engineers reported that the wall, already shaking under the French fire, would soon give way: the Spanish garrison appeared adequate to the defence of the now diminished front, which was alone assailed; and therefore they merely put their troops at the disposition of the Spanish authorities, without insisting that they should share the dangers of the assault. Contreras, who saw that they despaired of the defence of the place, generously refused to require their aid in the town, and acquiesced in their project to co-operate with Campoverde externally in attempting to raise the siege. This however failed, from the impossibility of getting that general and the governor to agree on any joint plan of operations; and the result was, that the precious hours were lost in useless deliberation. Two thousand British troops, capable of rendering Tarragona as impregnable against the enemy as Acre had proved, and of changing the whole fortune of the war in the east of Spain, remained on board their transports, passive spectators of the last struggles for Catalonian independence.²

² Tor. iv. 140,
141. Nap. iv.
94, 95. South.
v. 305, 306.
Contreras'
Report.
Suchet, ii.
421.

This resolution of the English commanders to keep themselves afloat proved fatal to the besieged city. The withdrawal of the English, at that period universally deemed in the Peninsula invincible, inevitably produced the general impression that the defence could no longer be maintained, and spread distrust and irresolution at the very moment when vigour and enthusiasm were indis-

pensably necessary to avert the crisis. Suchet, meanwhile, was stimulated by the strongest motives to press on and complete his conquest. The town was half taken; the rampart which separated him from the portion which still remained in the hands of the Spaniards, had no counterscarp or wet ditch; the harbour was in his hands; and his breaching batteries, run up to within musket-shot of the walls, had already begun to shake their aged masonry. Contreras, however, though abandoned by the British, was not dismayed. A thick hedge of aloë-trees, no small obstacle to troops, grew at the foot of the rampart; defences behind the breach were prepared; the adjoining houses loop-holed as at Saragossa; barricades were erected across the streets leading into the interior of the town; the breach itself was occupied by three strong battalions; reserves immediately behind were ready to support any point which might be menaced; and eight thousand veteran troops within the walls still promised a desperate resistance. Such was the vigour with which the fire of the place was kept up, that the parapets in the nearest French trenches, erected within the lower town, were shot away; and the gunners stood exposed beside their pieces to a tremendous storm of musketry from the rampart, which swept away numbers every minute. The place of those who fell, however, was instantly supplied by others; the fire of the assailants' batteries continued without intermission; the breach rapidly widened with every discharge: while the impatience on either side for the final struggle became such, that the soldiers on the walls and in the trenches stood up and hurled defiance with frantic gestures at each other, in the midst of the tempest of shot which was flying on all sides. At length Suchet, at five in the afternoon, deeming the breach sufficiently widened to admit of being carried, traversed the ranks, addressing himself to every company; and, seeing the men wrought up to the highest pitch, gave the signal for assault, and fifteen hundred chosen troops, sallying forth from the trenches, rushed forward towards the rampart, while eight thousand more were in reserve in the trenches to support their attack.¹

The assailants had to cross a space a hundred and twenty yards broad before reaching the wall: and the

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81.

Preparations
for storming
of the upper
town.

June 27, 28.

¹ Suchet, ii.
88, 99. Nap.
iv. 96, 97.
Tor. iv. 142,
143. Belm.
iii. 531, 543.

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82.

Its desperate
chances.
June 23.

row of aloes at its foot offered no inconsiderable obstacle to their advance. When they leapt out of the trenches, the whole French batteries instantly ceased firing; while the fire of the Spaniards, from the summit of the rampart, redoubled, and a frightful storm of musketry, grape, hand-grenades, and howitzers, swept away the head of the column. On rushed those behind, however, over the dead bodies of their comrades, till the aloes were reached, but their line was found to be impenetrable; the column required to make a circuit to get round, and the delay and confusion incident to this obstacle had well-nigh proved fatal to the assault. When the troops, disordered and out of breath, at length reached the foot of the rampart, and began to ascend the breach, the crumbling ruins gave way under their feet; its summit was crowned by a phalanx of determined men, strongly armed with bayonets, swords, and hand-grenades. A converging fire of musketry fell on all sides, and the leading files were struck down by a shower of grape in flank from the bastion of St John. The column hesitated and recoiled in confusion: already the cries of victory were heard from the rampart, when Suchet, who was at hand to arrest the disorder, pushed forward a strong reserve, and himself followed with his staff to the scene of danger.¹

¹ Belm. iii.
539, 542.
Tor. iv. 143.
Nap. iv. 57.
Suchet, ii.
93, 100.

83.
And final
success.

Still the assailants hesitated at the foot of the breach, and, spreading out on either side in wild confusion, began a useless return to the fire of the enemy, or took shelter under the projections of the bastion of St Paul. Upon this, General Habert, Colonel Pépé, and the whole officers of the staff, themselves rushed forward to the breach, followed by the commanders of companies of the assaulting columns. Many fell in the ascent; but the remainder pushed on with heroic courage, and reached the top; the mass behind re-formed and rapidly followed on their footsteps, and the town was won. Eight thousand French, in the highest state of excitement, speedily streamed over the breach, and spread like a torrent along the ramparts on either side; and in the general confusion the three battalions, placed on and in support of the breach, were overthrown. A panic seized the Spanish troops in the interior;² almost all their defences were abandoned;

² Suchet, ii.
93, 106. Nap.
iv. 97, 98.
Tor. iv. 143.
Belm. iii.
539, 545.

and it was only at the barricades and loopholed houses near the street of La Rambla, that any serious resistance was experienced. There, however, a handful of desperate men defended themselves like lions, and it was only by continually bringing up fresh columns of attack, and by the failure of ammunition among the besieged, that they were at length overcome, and the town finally taken.*

The fame justly due to Suchet and his indefatigable army for this glorious exploit, which was one of the greatest blows struck during the whole Peninsular war, and gave a decisive preponderance to the French arms in the east of Spain, was deeply tarnished by the savage cruelty which disgraced their triumph after the city was taken. The heroic governor, Contreras, who had received a deep bayonet wound in the breast, near the breach, was borne on a board into the presence of the French commander, while the carnage was yet reeking in every quarter. Instead of admiring the valour and commiserating the situation of his fallen enemy, the victorious general reproached him for the tenacity of his defence, and declared he deserved instant death for having continued the resistance after the breach was practicable. "I know of no law," replied Contreras, "which compelled me to capitulate before the assault; besides, I expected succour. My person should be respected like that of the other prisoners, and the French general will respect it; if not, to him the infamy, to me the glory." This dignified answer recalled Suchet to his better feelings: he treated the captive general with respect, and soon after loaded him with kindness, and made advances to induce him to accept rank in the service of Joseph.¹ But the brave Spaniard was proof

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84.
Disgraceful
cruelty of the
French to
the city.

¹ Tor. iv.
144. Such.
ii. 105, 110.
Contreras'
Report, No.
22. Belm. iii.
544, 546.

* To such a height had the spirit of Suchet's troops arisen, that an Italian soldier named Bianchini, who, at the assault of Fort Olivo, had pursued the Spanish garrison to the foot of the walls of the town, and made some prisoners there, being brought before the general-in-chief, and asked what recompense he desired, answered—"The honour of mounting first to the assault of Tarragona." On the 28th June, this brave man, now promoted to the rank of a sergeant, presented himself in full uniform before the general, and claimed the honour which had been promised him. He obtained it; was seen at the head of the forlorn hope; received a wound, but still pressed on, encouraging his comrades to follow him; was twice again wounded without stopping; and at length fell, pierced to the heart by a musket-ball, near the summit of the breach! The spirit of ancient Rome is not extinct in Italy; it is only obscured by the corruptions which have overspread the higher ranks from long-continued civilisation.—See SUCHET'S *Memoirs*, ii. 100, 101.

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1811.

85.
Frightful
massacre in
the town.

and he was in consequence sent as a prisoner to the citadel of Bouillon, in the Low Countries, from whence he afterwards made his escape.

But in other quarters the work of slaughter went on without intermission. Gonzalez, the second in command, fell, pierced by more than twenty wounds: nine hundred wounded, who had sought refuge in the cathedral, and lay on the pavement weltering in blood, were spared; but upon the defenceless inhabitants the storm of the victors' fury fell with unexampled severity. Armed and unarmed, men and women, gray hairs and infant innocence, attractive youth and wrinkled age, were alike butchered by the infuriated troops, whose passions were not, as with the English soldiers, those of plunder or drunkenness, but the infernal spirit of implacable vengeance. Above six thousand human beings, almost all defenceless, were massacred on that dreadful night, which will be remembered in Spain as long as the human race endures. The greater part of the garrison, which had precipitated itself over the rocks, or rushed through the northern gates, enclosed within the French lines and the fire of the ramparts, were made prisoners; and when the magistrates of the surrounding country were, on the following morning, by Suchet's orders, brought into the town, and marched through the streets to see what fate awaited those who resisted the French arms, "the blood of the Spaniards," to use the expression of the French journalist of the siege, "*inundated the streets and the houses.*" Humanity, however, amidst such scenes of horror, has to recount with pleasure that many French officers exerted themselves, at the hazard of their own lives, though too often in vain, to stay the carnage; and that numbers of individuals owed their lives to their generous intercession.¹

¹ South. v. 307, 309.
Tor. iv. 144, 146. Suchet, ii. 105, 114.
Belm. iii. 544, 547.
Contreras' Report, No. 22. Suchet, ii. 423, 424.

86.
Immense
results of this
siege.

The trophies of the victory were immense; its results decisive. The French loss had been very severe during the siege, amounting to full five thousand men; but this was much exceeded by that of the besieged. Nine thousand of the garrison were made prisoners; three hundred and twenty guns mounted on the ramparts, fifteen thousand muskets, and above a million of cartridges, fell into the hands of the victors. The total loss to the Spaniards,

from the commencement of the operations, had been little short of twenty thousand of their best troops. The French artillery had discharged forty-two thousand projectiles, the Spaniards a hundred and twenty thousand during this siege—in every point of view, one of the most memorable in modern times. But its greatest results were the depriving the patriots of their grand military arsenal, and principal point of communication with the British fleets and the ocean in those parts of Spain. Justly impressed with the magnitude of those advantages, as well as the fortitude and ability displayed in their acquisition, Napoleon sent Suchet his marshal's baton, with an injunction to proceed as he had begun, and earn his dukedom under the walls of Valencia.¹

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¹ Suchet, iii.
121. Behn.
549, 550.
Tor. iv. 147.

Anxious to secure, by rapidity of operations, the whole fruits which might be expected from so great a stroke, Marshal Suchet no sooner found himself master of Tarragona, than he marched out with the greater part of his forces against Campoverde, whose troops, divided between consternation at its fall, and indignation at his temporising policy in not relieving it, were alike disheartened and distracted, and incapable of opposing any serious resistance to his arms. But the Spanish general fell back so rapidly into the upper valleys and mountain ridges of Catalonia, that Suchet could not reach him; and various atrocious deeds of cruelty, by which the French marshal endeavoured to strike terror into the Catalans during his march, only revived the exasperation, and sowed again the seeds of an interminable war in the province. Campoverde, however, finding himself in no condition to make head against so formidable an assailant, retired to the mountain ridges on the frontier of Aragon, and openly announced his intention, which a council of war supported, of abandoning the province altogether as a lost country. Upon this all the soldiers in his army who were not Catalans deserted; numbers of the natives of the province returned in despair to their homes; grief and dejection universally prevailed. Meanwhile fifteen hundred prisoners, chiefly wounded, were captured at Villa Nova when endeavouring to embark: the road to Barcelona was opened; and the Spanish rearguard defeated at Villa Franca. The Valencians,

87.
Suchet's next
operations.
June 29.

July 3.

July 5.

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1811.

July 9.

July 11.

¹ Tor. iv.
148, 150.
Nap. iv. 100,
103. Belm.
iii. 550, 553.

88.
Description
of Mont
Serrat.

however, so loudly remonstrated against being abandoned to their fate in the Catalonian mountains, the more especially when their own country was evidently threatened, that Campoverde agreed to return to Cervera; and the Valencians, three thousand in number, made their way to the sea-coast, where they were embarked at Arenis de Mar. The English Commodore, however, who took them on board, refused to embark any but Valencians, and thus the bulk of the army was forcibly retained on its own shores. Ultimately Campoverde was deprived of the command, which was conferred on General Lacy; and that indefatigable commander immediately gave a new organisation to his army, suited to the altered circumstances of the province. Dismissing a large proportion of the officers, and almost all the horses, he re-formed great part of the troops into guerilla bands, under whatever chiefs they chose to select, and numbers of them repaired to the standard of MINA, in Navarre, who had now risen to celebrity; and, after undergoing hardships and privations which exceed all portrayed in romance, ultimately joined the victorious host which, under Wellington, righted at the eleventh hour the wrongs of their country.¹

While the elements of resistance to French domination were thus, to all appearance, melting away in Catalonia, Suchet, whose activity neither difficulty could check nor prosperity diminish, executed a *coup-de-main* against MONT SERRAT, a celebrated mountain fastness, and now the last stronghold of independence in that part of Spain. It was composed of the convent of Our Lady of Mont Serrat, formerly possessing great riches, which had been removed at an early period of the war to Minorca by the monks; and stood upon the summit of a fantastic mountain, overlooking from the westward the plain of the Llobrigat, in the neighbourhood of Barcelona. The prodigious height of the precipices on which the buildings were situated; the wild forms of the peaks which shot up as it were into the sky around them; the naked and savage character of the rocks, like the bones of a gigantic skeleton, of which the whole upper part of the mountain is composed; the numerous hermitages which nestled like swallows' nests in the clefts, or crowned the projecting points in its

long ascent ; the blue waters of the Mediterranean seen bounding the distant horizon from the higher regions ; the smiling aspect of the plain of Barcelona, teeming with riches and glittering with buildings, at its foot, joined to the massy pile, Gothic towers and aerial spires. of the convent itself, at the summit—had long impressed the minds of the Spaniards with religious awe, and rendered this monastic retreat one of the most celebrated in the south of Europe. But war in its most terrible form was now to penetrate these abodes of solitude and meditation ; and the clang of musketry and the thunders of artillery were to re-echo amidst wilds hitherto responsive only to the notes of gratitude or the song of praise.¹

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The convent of Notre Dame, evacuated by the monks, had, from the beginning of the war, been a favourite station of the patriot bands ; and though its situation, at the distance of seven leagues only from Barcelona, had long rendered it at once a point of importance to the Spaniards and annoyance to the French, yet, from the apparently impregnable strength of its situation, no attempt had been made to dislodge them from it. Of late considerable pains had been taken to strengthen the position : the steep and narrow paths which wound up the long ascent, had in many places been fortified ; batteries had been erected on some commanding points ; deep ditches drawn across the road in others ; and near the monastery itself a strong intrenchment had been thrown up, while its gates were barricaded, and its massy walls loopholed for the fire of musketry. The principal approach was on the north side by Casa Mansana, and it was there that the greatest care of the garrison had been bestowed ; that which ascended the mountain on the south by Colbato, and on the east towards Monestrol, consisted of mere paths, so steep and rugged that they were deemed altogether inaccessible to a body of troops. Suchet, however, having accurately inquired into the nature of the ground, resolved to menace all the three approaches at once ; the principal attack, under General Maurice Mathieu, being directed on the northern side.²

¹ Tor. iv. 151,
152. Suchet,
ii. 122, 123.

89.
Preparations
for storming
the convent.
July 25.

² Suchet, ii.
124, 128.
Tor. iv. 150.
Nap. iv. 102,
103.

This column experienced no serious opposition till it arrived at the chapel of Saint Cecilia ; but there a strong

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90.
Storming
of the
convent.

intrenchment blockaded the road, while a severe fire of grape and musketry from the overhanging woods and cliffs seemed to render attack impossible. The grenadiers halted, and fell back till they were out of reach of the fire: but, meanwhile, Maurice Mathieu detached some light troops to scale the rocks which arose behind the intrenchments; and these gallant men, after undergoing incredible fatigues, succeeded in establishing themselves on the heights in the rear of the Spanish position, and opened a plunging fire on the gunners at their pieces. Encouraged by this joyful sound, the grenadiers in front returned to the charge, and by a rapid rush succeeded in passing the perilous defile, and carrying the work: a second battery was won in like manner, though the Spaniards stood their ground bravely, and were bayoneted at their guns; and when the assailants reached the summit, and were preparing to assault the monastery, the sound of musketry behind, and a sudden rush of the garrison towards the barriers in front, told them that those intrusted with the attack on the side of Colbato had already succeeded in surmounting all the difficulties of the ascent, and that the last stronghold of the enemy was won. They had got into the enclosures by means of a postern which had been neglected, and made their way by a sudden surprise into the convent." Baron D'Erolles threw himself with the greater part of the garrison down some ravines, known only to the Spanish mountaineers, and reached the Llobrigat without any material loss; but the convent, with ten pieces of cannon and all its stores, was taken, and the reputation of invincibility reft from the last asylum of Catalonian independence. Two of the monks were massacred in the first heat of the victory, but the officers succeeded in rescuing the remainder; the hermits were left unmolested in their moss-grown cells. This brilliant success, coming so soon after the capture of Tarragona, produced a powerful impression over the whole province; many guerilla bands laid down their arms; several towns sent in their submission; and Suchet, deeming Macdonald in sufficient strength now to complete its pacification, returned to Saragossa to accelerate his preparations for the expedition against Valencia.¹

¹ Suchet, ii.
124, 131,
Nap. iv. 102,
104. Tor. iv.
150, 151.

No force now remained in Catalonia capable of interfering with the blockade of Figueras, which Napoleon was daily becoming more desirous of regaining for the French empire. Macdonald, on his part, was not less solicitous for its reduction, as well to wipe out the blot which its capture had affixed on his scutcheon, as to propitiate the Emperor, who was much displeased at the repeated checks he had experienced, and was already preparing to give him a successor. Despairing of effecting the reduction of so strong a place, garrisoned by four thousand resolute men, by open force, he preferred the surer but more tedious method of blockade; and for this purpose drew vast lines of circumvallation around the town, resembling rather the imperishable works of the Roman legions, than those constructed during the fierce but brief career of modern warfare. These lines were eight miles long, making a complete circuit of the town, beyond the reach of cannon-shot, and effectually barring all communication between the besieged and the circumjacent country. They were formed every where of a ditch, palisades, covered way, and curtain, were strengthened at equal distances by bastions armed with heavy cannon, and defended by twenty thousand men. Secure behind these inaccessible ramparts, the French troops quietly waited till famine should compel the besieged to surrender. Such was their strength, and the vigilance with which they were guarded, that the sallies of the garrison, and the efforts of the Somatenes in the adjacent hills to throw succours into the fortress, were alike baffled; and at length, after losing fifteen hundred of their number in these ineffectual sorties, and having exhausted all their means of subsistence, the Spaniards were compelled to surrender at discretion. Thus was accomplished the prophecy of Suchet, that the surprise of Figueras, by inducing the Spaniards to detach a portion of the defenders of Tarragona to its succour, would prove rather prejudicial than auspicious to their arms; and the wisdom of his military counsel not to endanger success by dividing his means, but, relinquishing all minor objects, to concentrate his whole force upon the principal stronghold of the enemy, and vital point of the campaign.¹

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91.
Blockade
and surrender
of Figueras.
Aug. 19.

Aug. 19.

¹ Belm. i.
206, 207.
Tor. iv. 154,
155. Vict. et
Conq. xx.
533, 534.

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92.

Invasion of
Valencia by
Suchet, and
preparations
for its defence
by the Span-
iards.
Sept. 15.

Having completed his preparations, Marshal Suchet, in obedience to the positive orders of Napoleon, in the beginning of September commenced his march against Valencia, at the head of rather above twenty thousand men; the remainder of his force, which numbered nearly forty thousand combatants, being absorbed in garrisoning the numerous fortresses he had captured, and in keeping up his extensive communications. The Spaniards, meanwhile, had not been idle. Aware of the formidable onset which now awaited them, the Junta of Valencia had for a considerable period been busily engaged in preparing for defence. The fortifications of Peniscola, Oropesa, and Murviedro or Saguntum, which lay on the great road from Barcelona, had been materially strengthened; the last had a garrison of three thousand men, and was amply provided with the means of defence; Valencia itself was covered by an external line of redoubts and an intrenched camp, which, in addition to its massy though antiquated walls, and ardent population, inflamed by the recollection of two successive defeats of the French, seemed to promise a difficult, perhaps a doubtful contest. Blake, the captain-general of the province, and a member of the Council of Government, was at the head of the army, which mustered five-and-twenty thousand men, comprising almost all the regular soldiers in the Peninsula. He had it in his power, if overmatched, to fall back on the impregnable walls of Carthagená or Alicante; while the sea in his rear every where afforded the inestimable advantage, at once of securing succour from the English in case of resistance, and the means of evasion in the event of a defeat.¹

¹ Vict. et
Conq. xx.
334, 335.
Jom. iii. 526.
527. Tor. iv.
208, 211.
Suchet, ii. 43,
151, 155.

93.
Description
of Saguntum.
² Polyb. 1,
iii. c. 2.

MURVIEDRO, the ancient SAGUNTUM, is a fortress built upon the summit of a steep and rocky hill, at the bottom of which the modern town of Murviedro stands. The waters of the Mediterranean, in the days of Hannibal, approached to within a mile of its eastern walls;² but at present they are five miles distant—a proof how much the sea has retired along that coast in the intervening ages. Many remains of its former grandeur are still to be found by the curious antiquary, although its greatness has so much declined that the modern city contains but six thousand inhabitants, and occupies only a corner of

the ample circuit of the ancient walls. The modern fortress, which bears the name of San Fernando de Saguntum, stands on the summit of the mountain round the base of which the ancient city was clustered, and consisted at this time of two redoubts, armed only with seventeen pieces of cannon. The garrison, however, was three thousand strong; the principal defence of the place consisted in its position, perched on the summit of a rock, perpendicular on three sides, and only accessible on the west by a steep and devious ascent; and its importance was great, as commanding the only road from Barcelona or Aragon to Valencia.¹

The lower town, upon the approach of the French, was abandoned, and occupied by General Habert's division without resistance. Immediately the investment of the fort was completed; and the French engineers having by means of their telescopes discovered two old breaches in the walls, which were as yet only imperfectly barricaded with wood, though the besieged were endeavouring to erect a curtain of masonry behind them, conceived the design of carrying the place by escalade. The success which had attended a similar *coup-de-main* at the Col de Balaguer* seemed to encourage the attempt, and two columns were formed early on the 28th for the assault; but the vigilance of the Spanish governor, Andriani, had penetrated the design; the assailants were received with a close and well-directed fire of grape and musketry, and repulsed with the loss of four hundred men. Warned by this check of the need of circumspection, Suchet now saw the necessity of making approaches in form; but for this purpose it was necessary to reduce the little fort of Oropesa, which commanded in a narrow defile the road by which alone artillery could be brought up from the great arsenal at Tortosa. It was attacked, accordingly, by a Neapolitan division: but, though it was only garrisoned by two hundred men, and armed with four guns, this Lilliputian stronghold held out till the 11th October, when it was taken after a practicable breach had been made in the ramparts.² At the same time, the garrison of another castle on the sea-coast, near the same pass, resolutely refused to capitulate, even when

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¹ Tor. iv. 209,
210. Suchet,
ii. 154, 159.
Vict. et Conq.
xx. 335, 336.

94.

Siege and
unsuccessful
assault of
Saguntum.
Sept. 28.

Oct. 11.
Oct. 12.
² Suchet, ii.
158, 168.
Tor. iv. 212,
214. Beim.
i. 209.

* *Ante*, Chap. lxv. § 61.

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1811.

95.
A second
assault de-
feated.
Oct. 2.

Oct. 18.

the wall was ruined and the enemy were mounting to assault; and succeeded, when the post was no longer tenable, in getting clear off by sea, and with the aid of an English frigate, to Valencia.

Suchet, meanwhile, marched against and defeated a considerable body of guerillas under Don Carlos O'Donnell, which had assembled in his rear; and the heavy stores and siege equipage having been now brought up from the Ebro, the approaches against Saguntum were carried on with extraordinary vigour. A practicable breach having been made in the walls, a second assault was ordered on the 18th October. Though the guns in the fort were entirely silenced by the superior number and weight of the enemy's cannon, and the rampart had neither wet ditch nor exterior defences, yet the heroism of the garrison supplied all these defects. With indefatigable perseverance they collected sand-bags, with which they stopped up the chasm in the masonry occasioned by the French guns; their muskets returned a gallant though feeble fire to the thunder of the besiegers' artillery; and a band of dauntless men on the summit of the breach braved the French fire, and provoked the imperial grenadiers to come on to the assault. Soon their desire was gratified. A chosen column, eight hundred strong, was let loose from the trenches, and swiftly ascended towards the breach: they succeeded, though with great difficulty, in reaching its middle; but there the fire of musketry, discharged within pistol-shot of their heads, was so severe, and the shower of stones, hand-grenades, and cold shot from the summit so overwhelming, that after a short and bloody struggle, they were hurled back to the foot of the hill with the loss of half their number, and Saguntum again, after the lapse of two thousand years, repulsed the soldiers of Napoleon, as it had done those of Hannibal.¹*

¹ Nap. iv.
273, 274.
Tor. iv. 214,
216. Suchet,
ii. 168, 173.
Vict. et Conq.
xx. 136, 138.

Suchet's situation was now again full of peril. The

* "*Pæno cepisse jam se urbem, si paululum annitatur, credente; Saguntinis pro nudatâ menibus patriâ corpora opponentibus, nec ullo pedem referente, ne in relictam a se locum, hostem immitteret. Itaque quo acrius et conferti magis utrimque pugnabant, eo plures vulnerabantur; nullo inter arma corporaque vano intercidente telo. Quum diu anceps fuisset certamen, et Saguntinis, quia præter spem resisterent, crevisset animi; Pænus quia non vicisset pro victo esset; clamorem repente oppidani tollunt, hostemque in ruinas muri expellunt; inde impeditum trepidantemque exturbant; postremo fuscum fugatumque in castra redigunt.*"—Livy, lib. xxi. cap. 8, 9.

guerilla parties infested the road between Tortosa and Oropesa, so as to render the conveyance of stores and provisions impossible, except by the detachment of a considerable force. Blake, with an army superior to his own, and entirely master of his operations, was in his front: he could not pass Saguntum, already proved by the failure of two assaults to be all but impregnable, and to retreat would be to rouse a flame throughout the whole of the east of Spain, and lose all the fruits of the fall of Tarragona. Nor were the accounts from Catalonia and Aragon calculated to allay his fears as to the issue of the campaign. The long inactivity of the French troops around Figueras, had been attended with its usual effects in those warm latitudes. Sickness had spread to a frightful extent during the autumnal months; ten thousand men were in hospital; and the communication between Gerona and Barcelona was again entirely interrupted. Encouraged by the debility of the enemy's forces in the Ampurdan, and the absence of Suchet from the southern parts of the province, the unconquerable Catalans had again risen in arms. Lacy had succeeded in re-organising eight thousand men under D'Erolles and Sarsfield, who were prosecuting a partisan warfare with indefatigable activity—arms and ammunition having been furnished by the English. Busa, a mountain post of great strength about twenty miles above Cardona among the Spanish Pyrenees, fixed on as their arsenal and seat of government, was already fortified and guarded by the militia of the country. Lacy was soon in a condition to resume offensive operations; he surprised Igualada, destroyed the French garrison, two hundred strong, captured an important convoy, compelled the enemy to evacuate Mont Serrat and retire to Tarragona, levied contributions up to the gates of Barcelona, and even crossed the frontier, carrying devastation through the valleys on the French side of the Pyrenees. Six hundred men were made prisoners at Cervera, two hundred at Bellpuig. Macdonald was recalled from a command in which he had earned no addition to his laurels, and it was only by collecting a force of fourteen thousand infantry and two thousand horse, that his successor Decaens was enabled to escort a convoy from Gerona to Barcelona.¹

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96.

Perilous
situation of
Suchet after
this repulse.

Aug. 1811.

Sept. 10.

Sept. 12.

Oct. 11.

Oct. 14.

¹ Tor. iv. 224,
230. Nap.
iv. 276, 277.

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97.
Successes of
the guerillas
in Aragon.

Oct. 5.

Oct. 9.

¹ Suchet, ii.
192, 203.
Tor. iv. 230,
239. Nap.
iv. 278, 280.

The intelligence from upper Aragón was not less disquieting. The, EMPECINADO, a noted guerilla chief, whose stronghold was the mountains near Guadalaxara, had united with Duran and other guerilla leaders; and their united force, consisting of six thousand infantry and two thousand five hundred horse, besieged Calatayud: MINA, another guerilla partisan, with five thousand men, was threatening Aragon from the side of Navarre; and lesser partisans were starting up in every direction. Musnier's and Severole's division, indeed, numbering twelve thousand soldiers, succeeded in raising the siege of Calatayud; but Mina gained great successes in the western part of the provinces, pursued the flying enemy up to the gates of Saragossa, and totally destroyed twelve hundred Italians, who were following him in his retreat towards the mountains. Such was the local knowledge and skill of this incomparable partisan, that, though actively pursued by several bodies of the enemy much superior to his own troops, he succeeded in getting clear off with his prisoners, which were taken from his hands on the coast by the Iris frigate, and conveyed safe to Corunna. The road between Tortosa and Oropesa also, Suchet's principal line of communication, was entirely closed by lesser bands: and it was easy to see, that if he either remained where he was without gaining decisive success, or fell back to the Ebro, he would be beset by a host of enemies who would speedily wrest from him all his conquests.¹

98.
Advance of
Blake to raise
the siege.

From this hazardous situation, the French general was relieved by the imprudent daring of the Spaniards themselves. Blake, who was no stranger to the formation of a practicable breach in the walls of Saguntum, and knew well that, notwithstanding their recent success, the brave garrison would in the end sink under a repetition of such attacks, was resolved that they should not perish under his eyes, as that of Tarragona had done under those of Campoverde. He accordingly made preparations for battle, and for this purpose got together twenty-two thousand infantry, two thousand five hundred horse, and thirty-six guns. With this imposing force, after issuing a simple but touching proclamation to his troops, he set out from Valencia on the evening of the 24th October,

and made straight for the French position under the walls of Saguntum. Suchet was overjoyed at the intelligence, which reached him at eleven at night; and immediately gave orders for stopping the enemy on his march before he had arrived at the ground where he designed to give battle. With this view the French general drew up the whole force that he could spare from the siege, about seventeen thousand men, with thirty guns, in a pass about three miles broad, which extended from the heights of Vall de Jesus and St Espiritus, to the sea; and through which the Spanish army behoved to pass, in approaching Saguntum from Valencia. The gunners were all left in the trenches; and in order to deceive the garrison, and deter them from attempting a sortie, they received orders to redouble their fire upon the breach. But notwithstanding this, the besieged from their elevated battlements desiered the approaching succour, and with intense anxiety watched the progress of the advancing host.¹

At eight o'clock on the following morning, the Spanish army commenced the attack upon the French at all points, and soon drove in their light troops. Following up this advantage, they pressed on and won a height on the French right which commanded that part of the field, and established some guns there which did great execution. The whole Spanish left, encouraged by this success, advanced rapidly and with the confidence of triumph; their dense battalions were speedily seen crowning the heights on the French right; and the garrison of Saguntum, who crowded the ramparts, deeming the hour of deliverance at hand, already shouted victory and threw their caps in the air, regardless of the besiegers' fire, which never for an instant ceased to thunder on their walls. In truth, the crisis was full of danger, and a moment's hesitation on the general's part would have lost the day. Suchet instantly ordered up Harispe's division, which, after a severe struggle, regained the heights; and perceiving that Blake was extending his wings with a view to outflank his opponents, he brought up his second line, leaving the cuirassiers only in reserve, and made a vigorous attack on the Spanish centre. The first onset, however, proved utterly unsuccessful;² the

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Oct. 24.

¹ Tor. iv.
217, 218.
Nap. iv. 281,
282. Suchet,
ii. 179, 181.

99.
Battle of
Saguntum.
Oct. 25.

² Vict. et
Cong. xx.
343, 346.
Tor. iv. 318,
320. Suchet,
ii. 180, 186.

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Spaniards, driven from the height, rallied behind their second line, and again advanced with the utmost intrepidity to retake it : Caro's dragoons overthrew the French cavalry in the plain at its foot ; and not only was the hill again wrested from the infantry, but the guns planted on it fell into the enemy's hands.

100.
Final victory
of the
French.

Every thing seemed lost, and would have been so, but for the valour and presence of mind of the French commander-in-chief. He instantly flew to the reserve of cuirassiers, and addressing to them a few words of encouragement, in doing which he received a wound in the shoulder, himself led them on to the charge. They came upon the Spanish infantry, already somewhat disordered by success, at the very time when they were staggered by a volley in flank from the 116th regiment, which, inclining back to let the torrent pass which they could not arrest, at this critical moment threw in a close and well-directed fire. The onset of the terrible French cuirassiers, fresh and in admirable order, on the Spanish centre, proved irresistible. The Valencian horsemen, already blown and in disarray, were instantly overthrown ; the infantry were broken and driven back ; not only were the captured guns retaken, but the whole Spanish artillery in that part of the field was seized, and the two wings were entirely separated from each other. The French right at the same time succeeded in regaining the ground it had lost on the hills, and threw the Spanish left opposed to it in great confusion into the plain ; their left also was advancing ; and Blake, seeing the day lost, retired towards Valencia, with the loss of a thousand killed and wounded, and two thousand five hundred men, and twelve guns, taken. Suchet lost eleven hundred men in the action ; but Blake's inability to contend with him in the field was now apparent ; and so depressing was this conviction to the garrison of Saguntum, that they capitulated that night, though the breach was not yet practicable, and the garrison still two thousand five hundred strong, deeming it a useless effusion of blood to hold out longer, now that relief had become hopeless.¹

¹ Suchet, ii.
180, 191.
Tor. iv. 218,
221. Nap. iv.
285, 286.
Vict. et Conq.
343, 349.

Though this important victory and acquisition gave the French general a solid footing in the kingdom of Valencia, he did not consider himself as yet in sufficient strength

to undertake the siege of its capital, and the situation of Blake was far from being desperate. His forces were still above twenty thousand men: he was master of an intrenched camp with a fortified town enclosed within its circuit; and the sea and harbour gave him unlimited means of obtaining reinforcements and supplies from the rear. Impressed with these ideas, as well as the serious character which the desultory warfare had assumed in Aragon and Catalonia in his rear, Suchet halted at Saguntum, and made the most pressing representations to Napoleon as to the necessity of reinforcements before he could proceed further in his enterprise. During six weeks that he remained quiescent at that fortress, he was incessantly engaged in making preparations for the siege of Valencia; while the Spaniards, who had all withdrawn behind the Guadalaviar, were daily recruiting their numbers, and completing the arrangements for defence. Although, however, a great degree of enthusiasm prevailed among the people, yet no indication appeared which augured a desperate resistance; and it was very evident that the Valencians, if shut up within their walls, would not imitate the citizens of Numantium or Saragossa. Meanwhile, Suchet on two occasions had defeated powerful bodies of guerillas under Duran and Campillo, who were infesting the rear of the army; and at length the divisions of Severole and Reille having, by command of the Emperor, been placed under his orders, and reached his headquarters, he prepared in the beginning of December, with a force now augmented to thirty-three thousand men, to complete the conquest of Valencia; and, for this purpose, pushed his advanced posts to the banks of the Guadalaviar, so that the river alone separated the hostile armies.¹

By drawing considerable reinforcements from the troops in Murcia, Blake had augmented his army to twenty-two thousand men. He had broken down two out of the five stone bridges which crossed the river; the houses which commanded them on the south bank were occupied and loopholed; the city was surrounded by a circular wall thirty feet high and ten thick, but with a ditch and covered way only at the gates. Around this wall, about a mile farther out, was the rampart of the intrenched camp, five miles round, which enclosed the whole city

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101.

Delay of
Suchet at
Saguntum,
till he re-
ceives rein-
forcements.

Nov. 7.

Nov. 23.

Nov. 23.

¹ Suchet, ii.
201, 213.
Tor. iv. 269,
274. Vict.
et Conq. xx.
351, 352.
Nap. iv. 291.

102.

Suchet ap-
proaches and
surrounds
Valencia.
Dec. 25.

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Dec. 25.

and suburbs, and was defended by an earthen rampart, the front of which was so steep as to require to be ascended by scaling-ladders, while a wet ditch ran along its front. But all history demonstrates that such preparations, how valuable soever to a brave and disciplined, are of little avail to a dejected or unwarlike array, if vigorously assailed by an enterprising enemy. In the night of the 25th December, two hundred French hussars crossed the river several miles above the town, opposite the village of Ribaroya, by swimming their horses across, and put to flight the Spanish outposts. The engineers immediately began the construction of two bridges of pontoons for the infantry and artillery; and with such expedition were the operations conducted, and the troops moved across, that, before the Spaniards were well aware of their danger or the movement which was in contemplation, Suchet himself, with the main body of his forces, and the whole of Reille's division, had not only crossed over, but, by a semicircular march, had got entirely round the Spanish intrenched camp, in such a manner as to cut off the retreat from the city towards Alicante and Murcia. It was precisely a repetition of the circular sweep by which Davoust, in 1805, had interposed between Ulm and Vienna, and cut off all chance of escape from its ill-fated garrison.* The French hussars fell in with the Spanish cavalry hurrying out of the city to stop their advance at Aldaya, several miles round, and to the south-west of the intrenched camp. The former were overpowered in the first encounter, and General Broussand made prisoner; but soon rallying, as fresh troops came up, they regained their lost ground, delivered their general, and pursued their march. At the same time, the better to conceal his real design, Suchet caused Palombini with his division to cross the river a little farther down, and make for Mislata, and the westward of Valencia. The two divisions of Musnier and Habert, which were left on the other bank of the river, commenced a furious assault on the north of the intrenched camp. The roar of artillery was heard on all sides; the rattle of musketry seemed to envelop the city;¹ and it was hard even for the most experienced general to

¹ Suchet, ii. 210, 216.
 Tor. iv. 273,
 274. Nap.
 iv. 296, 297.
 Vict. et
 Conq. xx.
 553, 554.

* *Ante*, Chap. xi. § 49.

say to which quarter succour required in the first instance to be conveyed.

In the midst of all the tumult, however, the French marshal incessantly pressed on to the main object of his endeavours, which was to sweep round the whole southern side of the town; and interpose near the lake ALBUFERA DA VALENCIA,* on the seacoast, between Blake's army and the line of retreat to Alicante. So anxious was he to effect this object, that he put himself at the head of Harispe's division, which formed the vanguard of the force which had crossed the river at Ribaroya, and pressing constantly forward, overthrew all opposition, and never halted till he had reached the western margin of the lake, and had become entire master of the southern road. Meanwhile, the action continued with various success in other quarters; the leading brigades of Palombini's division, charged with the attack on Mislata, encountered so tremendous a fire from the Spanish infantry and redoubts that they fell back in utter confusion almost to the banks of the Guadalaviar; but without being diverted by this check, fresh battalions crossed over, and, following fast on the traces of Harispe, completed the sweep round the intrenched camp, and established the general-in-chief in such strength on its southern front, that he was in no danger of being cut off, and in condition to shift for himself. Deeming himself secure, Suchet at this critical moment ascended the steeple of the village of Chirivilla, to endeavour to ascertain by the line of smoke how the battle was proceeding in other quarters; and when there, he narrowly escaped being made prisoner by a Spanish battalion, which, in the general confusion, entered the village, then occupied only by a few horsemen and his own suite; and it was only by an impetuous charge of his aides-de-camp and personal attendants, that the enemy, who were ignorant of the important prize within their grasp, were repulsed.¹

General Habert at the same time not only drove the enemy from the northern bank, but, throwing a bridge over the river, under cover of the fire of fifty pieces of cannon, below Valencia, passed over, amidst a terrible fire of cannon

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The Spaniards are defeated, and thrown back into Valencia. Dec. 26.

¹ Vict. et Conq. xx. 352, 354. Nap. iv. 297, 300. Suchet, ii. 214, 223.

104.
Victory of the French.

* There are several Albuferas; the word means a salt-water lake or marsh, similar to the "Haf," on the shores of the Baltic.

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and musketry, and pushed his advanced posts on till they met, near the northern end of the lake of Albufera, those of Harispe, which had crossed above the town and accomplished its circuit on the southern side. Thus the investment of the place was completed; and so little had the victors suffered in this decisive operation, that their loss did not exceed five hundred men. That of the Spaniards was not much greater, though they abandoned eighteen guns to the enemy; but they sustained irreparable damage by having their army entirely dislocated, and the greater part of it shut up, without the chance of escape, in Valencia, where Blake with seventeen thousand men had taken refuge. The remainder broke off from the main body, and, fortunately for the independence of the Peninsula, succeeded in reaching Alicante, though in straggling bands, to the number of above four thousand men. It is a signal proof of the contempt which the French general must have entertained for his opponents, that he thus ventured to spread his troops in a circular sweep of more than fifteen miles in length, with their flank exposed the whole way to the attacks of a concentrated enemy little inferior in number, in possession of an intrenched camp; and of the strong foundation for that contempt, that he succeeded in his design.¹

¹ Suchet, ii. 214, 223.
Tor. iv. 271, 279. Nap. iv. 297, 300.
Vict. et Cong. xx. 353, 356.

105.
Siege and fall of Valencia.
Dec. 28.

The decisive effects of the investment of the intrenched camp and city of Valencia, were speedily apparent. A few days after, Blake, at the head of fifteen thousand men, endeavoured to force his way out of the town by the left bank of the Guadalaviar; but though the column at first had some success, and drove in the enemy's advanced posts, yet Blake had not determination enough to enforce the only counsel which could extricate the troops from their perilous predicament. Lardizabal did not evince his usual energy in the advance; the advice of the heroic Zayas to press on at all hazards, sword in hand, was overruled; some difficulties at crossing the canals threw hesitation into the movements of the whole; and, after losing the precious minutes in vacillation, the Spanish general returned on his footsteps to Valencia; while his advanced guard, to whom the order to return could not be communicated, got safe off to the mountains. A similar attempt was made a few days after on the road to

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Alicante with no better success. Meanwhile Suchet was commencing regular approaches; and on the night of the 5th, the Spanish general, despairing of defending the vast circuit of the intrenched camp with a depressed army and irresolute population, withdrew altogether from it, and retired into the city. The French, perceiving the retrograde movement, broke into the works, and pressed on the retiring enemy so hotly, that eighty pieces of heavy artillery, mounted on the redoubts, fell into their hands, and they immediately established themselves within twenty yards of the town wall. Rightly conjecturing that the resistance of the Spaniards would be more speedily subdued by the terrors of a bombardment than by breaching the rampart, Suchet immediately erected mortar batteries, and began to discharge bombs into the city. Blake at first refused to capitulate, when terms were offered by the French general. No preparations, however, had been made to stand a siege; the pavement had nowhere been lifted; no barricades were erected; there were no cellars or caves, as at Saragossa, for the besieged to retire into to avoid the fire. Ere long some of the finest buildings in the city, particularly the noble libraries of the archbishop and the university were reduced to ashes; and the impossibility of finding subsistence for a population of a hundred and fifty thousand souls besides the troops, as well as the desponding temper of the inhabitants, whose spirit was completely broken by the long train of disasters which had occurred in the east of Spain, soon convinced the Spanish general of the impossibility of holding out. After the bombardment had continued some days, therefore, and the town had been set on fire in different places, he proposed to capitulate. His terms, however, were sternly rejected; and at length, finding the majority of the inhabitants adverse to any further resistance, he surrendered at discretion.¹

By the capture of Valencia, the French general, in addition to the richest, most populous, and most important city of the Peninsula, next to Cadiz, that remained still unsubdued, became master of sixteen thousand regular troops, the best in Spain, who were made prisoners; besides three hundred and ninety pieces of cannon, thirty thousand muskets, two thousand cavalry

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Jan. 5.

Jan. 9.

¹ Tor. iv. 279,

289. Suchet,

ii. 225, 230.

Vict. et Conq.

xx. 356, 364.

Nap. iv. 300,

302. Jom. iii.

530, 531.

106.

Immense result of this conquest.

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and artillery horses, twenty-one standards, and immense military stores of all kinds. Seldom has a greater blow been struck in modern war: it was like that delivered by the English when they stormed the fortress of Seringapatam. The Spanish army marched out on the 10th of January, and, having laid down their arms, were immediately sent off to France. The elements of resistance still existed in the province: Alicante was unsubdued; no hostile troops had approached the plains of Murcia, and the mountain range which separated it from New Castile swarmed with active and resolute guerillas. But all unity of purpose or regular government was destroyed among the patriot bands by the fall of the provincial capital; the desultory warfare gradually died away, or was confined to the neighbourhood of the mountains; and the rich and beautiful plain of Valencia, the garden of Spain, the scene which poetic rapture sought in vain to enhance, with all its immense resources, fell entirely under the French power, and was immediately turned to the best account by the vigorous administration and oppressive impositions of Marshal Suchet.¹

¹ Suchet, ii. 231, 232.
Tor. iv. 288.
Vict. et Cong. x. 364, 365.

107.
Prodigious contributions levied by Suchet.

Order was completely preserved, discipline rigorously maintained; but all the most energetic characters, especially among the clergy, on the side of independence, nearly fifteen hundred in number, were arrested and sent to France, and some hundreds of them shot when unable from fatigue to travel farther; the perpetrators of the disgraceful murders which had stained the commencement of the war were justly executed; while an enormous contribution brought into the imperial coffers all that was rescued from private rapacity. On the war-wasted city and province of Valencia, at the close of four oppressive and burdensome campaigns, the French marshal imposed a contribution of fifty millions of francs, or two millions sterling, equivalent to five or six millions on a small portion of England; and such was the skill which long experience had given the officers of the imperial army in extracting its utmost resources from the most exhausted country, that this enormous impost was brought, with very little deduction, into the public treasury.²

² Vict. et Cong. x. 364, 365.
Tor. iv. 288, 291. Suchet, ii. 231, 232.

The subjugation of the province was soon after completed

by the reduction of the little fort of Peníscola; which, after a short siege, capitulated, with seventy-four pieces of cannon and a thousand men, in the beginning of February. This conquest was of importance, as completing the pacification of the whole province, and clearing of all molestation the road from Tortosa. Encouraged by the easy reduction of this stronghold, Montbrun, with his cuirassiers and horse-artillery, who had been detached, by Napoleon's orders, from Marmont's army to act against Valencia, presented himself before Alicante, and began to throw bombs from a few pieces into the town. This ludicrous attempt at a bombardment, however, only had the effect of accelerating the preparations for defence, which were now made in good earnest, and with such effect that the French general retired from before its walls towards Madrid, where his presence was loudly called for by the menacing attitude of the English on the Portuguese frontier. Alicante, meanwhile, daily beheld its defenders strengthened by the arrival of the broken bands who had escaped the wreck of Valencia; a powerful English force, some months afterwards, from Sicily landed within its walls, and this city shared, with Cadiz and Carthage, the glory of being the only Spanish cities which were never sullied by the presence of the enemy.¹

Justly desirous of giving a public mark of his high sense of the great services rendered to his empire by Marshal Suchet and his brave companions in arms, Napoleon, by a decree dated the moment that he received intelligence of the fall of Valencia, bestowed on the former the title of Duke of Albufera, the scene of his last and most decisive triumph, with rich domains attached to it in the kingdom of Valencia; on the latter, an extraordinary donation of two hundred million francs, or £8,000,000 sterling. These immense funds were directed to be realised "from our extraordinary domain in Spain, and such parts thereof as are situated in the kingdom of Valencia," and afford a striking example of the system of extortion and spoliation which the Emperor invariably put in force in all the territories which he conquered.² But the hour of

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108.

Complete
subjugation
of the pro-
vince.

Feb. 5.

Jan. 29.

¹ Suchet, ii.
234, 236.
Tor. iv. 293.
Vict. et Cong.
xx. 366.

109.

Honours and
rewards be-
stowed on
Suchet and
his troops.
Jan. 24.² Suchet, ii.
236. Vict. et
Cong. xx.
366, 367.

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retribution had arrived: the English armies on the Portuguese frontier were about to commence their immortal career; Russia was preparing for the decisive conflict; and there remained only to Suchet and his descendants the barren title which recalled the scene of his triumph and his glory.

110.
Reflections
on these cam-
paigns of
Suchet.

¹ Las Cas.
ii. 11.
O'Meara, i.
492.

There is no passage in the later history of Napoleon which is more worthy of study than the campaigns of Suchet, which have now been considered. Independent of the attention due to the military actions of a general, whom that consummate commander has pronounced the greatest of his captains,¹ there is enough in the annals of his exploits to attract the notice and admiration even of the ordinary historian, who pretends to nothing but a general acquaintance with military affairs. In the other campaigns of the French generals, especially in later times, the interest felt in the individual commander is often weakened by a perception of the magnitude of the force at his disposal, or its obvious superiority in discipline and equipment to the enemy with which it had to contend; and the Emperor himself, in particular, hardly ever took the field from the time when he mounted the imperial throne till he was reduced to a painful defensive struggle in the plains of Champagne, but at the head of such a force as at once ensured victory and rendered opposition hopeless. But in the case of Suchet, equally with that of Napoleon himself in the Italian campaign of 1796, or the French one of 1814, no such disproportion of force existed; the resources of the contending parties were very nearly balanced; and it was in the superior fortitude and ability of the victorious general that the real secret of his success is to be found.

111.
Great ability
displayed by
Suchet.

If the imperial commander was at the head of a body of men, superior in discipline, equipment, military prowess, and numbers, so far as real soldiers are concerned, to those under the Spanish generals; these advantages, how great soever, were compensated, and perhaps more than compensated, by the rugged and inaccessible fastnesses of which the greater part of Catalonia is composed, the absence of any practicable road through them, the number and strength of the fortified towns, the indomitable spirit and patri-

otic ardour of the inhabitants, and the vast resources at their command, from the vicinity of the sea and the succour of the English navy. No one who studies these campaigns can doubt that these circumstances counterbalanced the superior discipline and prowess of the French army in the field; that the issue of the contest thus came to be mainly dependent on the comparative talents of the two generals; and that if their relative positions in this respect had been reversed, and Suchet had been at the head of the Spanish, and Campoverde or Blake of the French forces, the result would in all probability have been the entire overthrow of the imperial power in the east of the Peninsula. And in the inexhaustible mental resources of the French general, his fortitude in difficulty, presence of mind in danger, and the admirable decision with which, in critical moments, he abandoned all minor considerations to concentrate his whole force on the main object of the campaign, is to be found the real secret of his glorious successes, as of all the most illustrious deeds recorded in history.

For the same reason, there is no period of the Peninsular war which an English historian feels so much pain in recounting, as that of this gallant but abortive struggle in the east of Spain. When we reflect on the noble stand which the province of Catalonia, aided only by transient succours from Valencia, made against the armies of two French marshals, who numbered seventy thousand admirable troops, in possession of the principal fortresses of the country, under their banners; when we recollect how equally the scales of fortune hung on several occasions, and with what decisive effect even a small reinforcement of regular troops, happily thrown in, would unquestionably have had on the issue of the contest; it is not without the bitterest feelings of regret that we call to mind that, at that very moment, twelve thousand English soldiers lay inactive in Sicily, an island effectually defended by our fleets from foreign invasion, and within only a few days' sail of the scene of conflict. Had half this force been landed in Catalonia previous to the siege of Tortosa, the French general would never have approached its walls. Had it been added to the defenders of the breaches of Tarragona, the French grenadiers would

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112.

Painful reflections on the conduct of England in this part of Spain.

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have been hurled headlong from its ramparts. Had it even come up to the rescue under the towers of Saguntum, the imperial eagles would have retreated with shame from the invasion of Valencia; and the theatre of the first triumphs of Hannibal might have been that of the commencement of Napoleon's overthrow. If we recollect that the capture of Valencia in the east of Spain was contemporaneous with the fall of Ciudad Rodrigo in the west, and that the extinction of regular warfare in one part of the Peninsula, occurred at the very moment when a career of decisive victories was commencing in another, it is difficult to over-estimate the importance to the general issue of the contest which would have arisen, from such a happy addition of British succour as would have kept alive the conflagration in a quarter where it was already burning so fiercely, and prevented that concentration of the enemy's force against Wellington, in the close of 1812, which wellnigh wrested from him the whole fruits of the Salamanca campaign.

113.
And especially in the failure to succour Tarragona.

But it is still more painful to recollect that English succour was at hand when the last stronghold of Catalonian independence was torn by overwhelming force from the arms of freedom; that the warriors of the power which had seen the conquerors of Egypt and the fortunes of Napoleon recoil from the bastions of Acre, beheld secure from their ships the grenadiers of Suchet mount the breach of Tarragona; and that, when the garrison of Saguntum saw their last hopes expire by the defeat of the army beneath their walls, British ships received by signal the intelligence, and the conquerors of Maida, within a few days' sail, might have snatched their laurels from the victors. We have a mournful satisfaction in recounting the horrors of the Corunna retreat; we dwell with exultation on the carnage of Albuera; for, that suffering was endured and that blood was shed in a noble cause, and England then worthily shared with her allies the dangers of the contest. But to relate that Tarragona fell unaided when the English banners were in sight, that deeds of heroism were done, and England though near was not there—this is indeed humiliation, this is truly national dishonour. And under the influence of this feeling, it is not only without regret, but

with a sense of justice which amounts to satisfaction, that the subsequent disgrace of the British arms before the walls of Tarragona will be recounted; for it was fitting that on the one and only spot in the Peninsula where deeds unworthy of her name had been done, the one and only stain on her fame should be incurred.*

In truth, even a cursory record of the campaign of 1811 must be sufficient to convince every impartial observer that a political paralysis had, to a certain extent, come to affect the British government, and that the cabinet was far from being directed during that year with the firm and unshrinking vigour which had hitherto characterised it. Nor is it difficult to discover to what cause this change is to be ascribed. The year 1811 was, as already noticed,† one of extraordinary distress in England: the exports and imports taken together had sunk, as compared with the preceding year, no less than thirty-six millions; the revenue had declined by above two millions; while the universal and poignant distress among the manufacturing classes, in consequence of the simultaneous operation of the Continental System and the American Non-intercourse Act, rendered the contraction of any considerable loan, or the imposition of fresh taxes of any amount, a matter of extreme difficulty. Add to this, the enormous expenditure consequent, in the beginning of the year and the close of the preceding one, on the vast accumulation of soldiers in the lines of Torres Vedras, and the unparalleled drain of specie which had taken place from the necessity of supplying the warlike multitude, and at the same time importing one million five hundred thousand quarters of grain, which had not only wellnigh exhausted the treasure of the country, but necessarily crippled all active operations on the part of the English generals in the Peninsula.

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LXV.
1812.

114.
Causes of the
weakness of
the English
government
in 1811.

* These observations are made in a national view, and for national objects only. No reflection is intended either on the naval and military officers engaged, who had scarcely a land force at their disposal adequate to the rude encounter which awaited them with the French veterans who crowded round the breach of Tarragona, and who did offer, though in a desponding way, to put their force, slender as it was, at the disposal of the Spanish governor. The chief blame rests with the administration, who had not discernment enough in military affairs to see that Tarragona was the vital point of the war in the east of Spain, and that the whole force we possessed in the Mediterranean should have been directed to its support.

† *Ante*, Chap. Lxiv. § 60.

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115.

The insecure
tenure go-
vernment had
of their
offices, the
great cause of
the inefficient
aid of Eng-
land in this
campaign.

But notwithstanding the weight justly due to these circumstances, a more minute examination of the state of parties at that period will demonstrate that it was not to them alone, nor even chiefly, that the languid operations of the English on the east of Spain, during this momentous year, are to be ascribed. Wellington had clearly pointed out the important advantages which must accrue to the French from the fall of Valencia, both from the concentration of all their force against himself, which it would enable the imperial generals to make; the resources which would await Suchet, and could immediately be rendered available in the province; and the disinclination which the grandees at Cadiz, having estates in the east of Spain, would in consequence probably feel towards any farther prosecution of the war.* That the British ministry were fully alive to these considerations, and prepared to act upon them as soon as they felt themselves secure in their offices, is proved by the considerable expeditions which, when equally hard pressed for money, they sent to Alicante from Sicily, in June 1812; and which, though not conducted with any remarkable ability, effectually stopped the progress of the French in the east of the Peninsula. The supineness with which, in the course of 1811, they permitted a much fairer opportunity of effecting this great object to escape, is to be ascribed chiefly to the insecure tenure by which they then held the reins of power, and the determined and impassioned resistance which the Opposition, their probable successors, had invariably offered to the continuance of the contest.†

* "The loss of Valencia would be of great importance: the greater part of the grandees of Spain have estates in that province, upon the revenues of which they have subsisted since they have lost every thing elsewhere. It may be expected, therefore, that the loss of this kingdom will induce many to wish to submit to the French yoke. The probability that the fall of Valencia would immediately follow the loss of Tarragona, was the cause of the ferment at Cadiz in the beginning of last summer. Though Blake has found no resources in that province, the French will find in Valencia the resources of money and provisions of which they stand so much in need. This conquest will enable the enemy to concentrate their forces. Even if Suchet should be unable to press on farther to the south of Valencia, and Soult should be unable to communicate with him through Murcia, Suchet will be enabled to communicate by a former route that he formerly possessed with the armies of the centre and of Portugal; and his army will be disposable to support the armies of the north and Portugal opposed to us."—WELLINGTON to the EARL of LIVERPOOL, 4th December 1811; GURWOOD, viii. 421, 422.

† "The government are terribly afraid that I get them and myself into a scrape. But what can be expected from men who are beaten three times a-week in the House of Commons? A great deal might be done if there existed in England less party and more public sentiment, and if there was any

The Prince Regent, as already noticed,* had assumed the reins of power, upon the incapacity of his father, in February 1811; and though he had continued the ministers in their several offices, yet he had done so on the distinct explanation that he was actuated solely by a desire, while the reigning monarch had any chance of recovery, not to thwart his principles, or choice of public servants; and it was well understood that, as soon as the restrictions expired in February 1812, he would send for the Whig leaders, which in point of fact he immediately did. The knowledge of this precarious tenure of their power, not only disheartened government from any fresh or extraordinary efforts in a cause which they had every reason to believe was so soon to be abandoned by the succeeding administration, but weakened to a most extraordinary degree their majority in the House of Commons, which in general, during that interregnum, did not exceed twenty or thirty votes.† The Opposition were so inveterate against the Spanish war, that not only did they declaim against it in the most violent manner on all occasions, both in and out of parliament; but, if we may believe the contemporary authority of Berthier, actually corresponded during the most critical period of the contest with Napoleon himself, and furnished him with ample details on the situation of the English army, and the circumstances which would, in all likelihood, defeat its exertions.‡ It is not surprising that a ministry thus powerfully thwarted, destitute of any members versed in military combination, with a very scanty majority in parliament, and no support farther than the cold assent

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1812.

116.

This was the real cause of the feeble prosecution of the war at this period.

government."—WELLINGTON to ADMIRAL BERKELEY, April 7, 1810; GURWOOD, vi. 21.

* *Ante*, Chap. lxiv. § 32.

† On the regency question on January 21, 1811—a vital question to ministers—the majority was only twenty-two, in a remarkably full house of four hundred and two members; and on Mr Vansittart's resolutions on the bullion report, a still more important division, it was only forty.—See *Parl. Deb.* xviii. 973; and xx. 128.

‡ "L'intention bien formelle de l'Empereur, est au mois de Septembre (1811) après la récolte, de combiner un mouvement avec l'armée du midi, un corps de l'armée du centre, et votre armée, pour culbutter les Anglais, et jusqu'à cette époque, que vous deviez agir de manière qu'aucun corps ennemi ne puisse tenir la campagne. Nous sommes parfaitement instruits par les Anglais, et beaucoup mieux que vous ne l'êtes. L'Empereur lit les journaux de Londres, et chaque jour un grand nombre des lettres de l'Opposition, dont quelques-unes accusent Lord Wellington, et parlent en détail de vos opérations. L'Angleterre tremble pour son armée d'Espagne, et Lord Wellington a toujours été en grande crainte de vos opérations."—BERTHIER, *Major-Général, au Maréchal MASSÉNA, Prince*

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of duty from the throne, should, during this critical year, have shrunk from the responsibility of implicating the nation, on a more extended scale, in a contest of doubtful issue even under the most favourable circumstances, which was, to all appearance, to be abandoned as hopeless by their successors.

117.
Surprising
result of these
circumstances
on the ulti-
mate fate of
Napoleon.

And yet, so little can even the greatest sagacity or the strongest intellect foresee the ultimate results of human actions, and so strangely does Providence work out its mysterious designs by the intervention of free agents, and the passions often of a diametrically opposite tendency of mankind, that if there are any circumstances more than others to which the immediate catastrophe which occasioned the fall of Napoleon is to be ascribed, it is the unbroken triumphs of Suchet in the east, and the strenuous efforts of the English Opposition to magnify the dangers and underrate the power of Wellington, in the west of the Peninsula. Being accustomed to measure the chances of success in a military contest by the achievements of the regular troops employed, and an entire stranger to the passions and actions of parties in a free community, the French Emperor not unreasonably concluded, when the last army of Spain capitulated in Valencia, and the whole country from the Pyrenees to Gibraltar had, with the exception of a few mountain districts, submitted to his authority, that the contest in the Peninsula was at an end, so far as the Spaniards were concerned. And when he beheld the party in Great Britain who had all along denounced the war there as utterly hopeless and irrational on the part of the country—and some of whom, in their zeal against its continuance and to demonstrate its absurdity, had actually corresponded with himself, even at the crisis of the contest—on the eve of getting possession of the reins of power

d'Essling, Paris, 29 Mars 1811.—BELMAS, *Journaux des Sièges dans la Péninsule*, i. 495, 496.

The "extensive correspondence" which is here stated to have gone on between Napoleon and the English Opposition, took place in March 1811; that is, when Massena lay at Santarem, and Wellington at Cartaxo, the most critical period of the campaign and the war. Notwithstanding the high authority on which the existence of this correspondence is asserted, it is impossible to believe that it took place with any of the leaders of the Opposition; but it shows with what a spirit the party, generally speaking, must have been actuated on this subject, when any, even the lowest of their number, could, at such a moment, resort to communication with the mortal enemy of their country.

in London, he was naturally led to believe that no cause for disquiet existed in consequence of the future efforts of England and Spain.

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He was thus tempted to prosecute, without hesitation, his preparations for the Russian war; and, before finishing the conflict in the Peninsula, to plunge into the perils of the Moscow campaign. And it was the double strain thus occasioned, as he himself has told us, which proved fatal to the empire.* Had he been less successful in the east of Spain—had the English Opposition less strenuously asserted the impolicy and hopelessness of British resistance in the west, he would probably have cleared his rear before engaging with a new enemy in front. Neither could have withstood his whole force if directed against itself alone; and the concentration of all his military power against Wellington in the first instance would have chilled all chance of success in Russia, and extinguished, perhaps for ever, the hopes of European freedom. So manifestly does Supreme power make the passions and desires of men the instruments by which it carries into effect its inscrutable purposes, that the very events which vice most strenuously contends for, are made the ultimate causes of its ruin; and those which virtue had most earnestly deprecated when they occurred, are afterwards found to have been the unseen steps which led to its salvation.

118.
And evidently led to
his ruin.

* “ Cette malheureuse guerre d’Espagne,” said Napoleon, “ était une véritable plaie; la cause première des malheurs de la France. L’Angleterre s’est fait une armée dans la Péninsule, et de là elle est devenue l’agent victorieux, le nœud redoutable de toutes les intrigues qui en peu se forment sur le Continent — C’est ce qui m’a perdu.”—LAS CASES, iv. 205.

CHAPTER LXVI.

CAMPAIGN OF 1811 ON THE PORTUGUESE FRONTIER.

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1811.

I.

Wellington's
reasons for
undertaking
the siege of
Badajoz.

WHEN the retreat of Massena from Torres Vedras had delivered the realm protected by Wellington from the imperial yoke, and the battle of Fuentes d'Onore had destroyed the former's hopes of retaining a permanent footing within the Portuguese frontier,* Wellington's eyes were immediately turned towards Badajoz, the loss of which he justly considered as not only perpetually endangering the west of the Peninsula, but as by far the greatest calamity which had happened to the Allies since Napoleon had taken Madrid. For, though not belonging to the first rank, either from wealth or population, this renowned fortress was of the very highest importance, from its great strength and important situation on the Estremadura frontier—at once forming a base for the operations of an invading army, which should threaten Lisbon on its most defenceless side, that of the Alentejo, and the strongest link in the iron girdle which was to restrain Wellington from pushing his incursions into the Spanish territory. While Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz remained in the enemy's hands, it was equally impossible for Wellington to feel any confidence in the safety of Portugal, or undertake any serious enterprise for the deliverance of Spain. The vast importance of fortresses in war, overlooked or forgotten amidst the unparalleled multitudes who overspread the plains of Europe during the latter years of the Revolutionary war, was fully appreciated and clearly expressed by the greatest masters

* *Ante*, Chap. lxiii. § 77.

in the art of war it produced—Napoleon and the Duke of Wellington.*

As the first siege of Badajoz by the English, and its immediate consequence, the battle of Albuera, are the true commencement of the deliverance of the Peninsula, and of that surprising series of victories by which the French were, in two campaigns, stripped of all their conquests in Spain, and driven across the Pyrenees, by an army which could not bring a third of their disposable forces into the field; it is of the highest importance to obtain a clear conception of the relative position of the contending parties at this eventful period, and of the causes which contributed to the production of so extraordinary a result. The British and Portuguese forces in Portugal, nominally above eighty thousand strong, could seldom number above fifty thousand men fit for actual service. This arose from the extremely reduced state of the Portuguese regiments after the French retreat from Torres Vedras, and the vast number of English sick who encumbered the hospitals—the result chiefly of the invulnerable unhealthiness of fresh regiments when first taking the field, and of the seeds of permanent disease which many of them brought with them from the Walcheren marshes. The strong bond of patriotism which had, during the invasion of their country, held the Portuguese troops to their standards, had been sensibly weakened since the last French columns had receded from their frontiers; and though the extraordinary fatigues of the pursuit did not at the time disable a large proportion of the troops, yet when they were over, and stationary habits began to co-exist with hot weather, the number of sick became so excessive, that in the beginning of October 1811, above twenty-five thousand British and Portuguese

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2.
Comparative
view of the
contending
powers at
this period.
Forces of the
Allies.

* "The loss of Badajoz I consider as by far the greatest misfortune which has befallen us since the commencement of the Peninsular war."—WELLINGTON.
"Had it not been for the fortresses in Flanders," says Napoleon, "the reverses of Louis XIV. would have occasioned the fall of Paris. Prince Eugene of Savoy lost a campaign in besieging Lille: the siege of Landrecy gave occasion to Villars to bring about a change of fortune. A hundred years after, in 1793, at the time of the treason of Dumourier, the strong places of Flanders again saved Paris: the Allies lost a campaign in taking Condé, Valenciennes, Quesnoy, and Landrecy. That line of fortresses was equally useful in 1814; and in 1815, if they had been in a condition of defence, and not affected by the political events at Paris, they would have arrested, till the German armies came up, the Anglo-Prussian army on the banks of the Somme."—NAPOLÉON, *Mémoires* in MONTMOLON, I. 292.

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1 Wellington
to Lord
Liverpool,
July 18, 1811.
Gurw. viii.
111.

were in hospital: of whom upwards of nineteen thousand were English soldiers. And such was the amount of desertion or sickness among the Portuguese at the commencement of Wellington's offensive campaign, that while thirty thousand stood on the rolls of the regiments for British pay, not more than fourteen thousand could be collected round the standards of the English general.*

3.
Forces of the
French.

On the other hand, the French force at that period in the Peninsula, amounted to the enormous number of three hundred and seventy thousand men, of whom forty thousand were cavalry; and of this number two hundred and eighty thousand were present with the eagles. A considerable part of this immense host, indeed, was actively engaged under Macdonald and Suchet in Catalonia, or was necessarily absorbed in keeping up the vast line of communication from the Pyrenees to Cadiz: but still the disposable amount of the troops which could be brought into the field from the three armies of the north, of Portugal, and of the south, was nearly triple what the English general could command, and they seemed to render any offensive operations on his part utterly hopeless. Soult's forces, in Andalusia and the southern part of Estremadura, on the 1st of October, numbered eighty-eight thousand men, including ten thousand cavalry, of whom sixty-seven thousand were present with the eagles: Marmont, in Leon, had sixty-one thousand under his banners, of whom above forty-one thousand infantry, and ten thousand horse, were in the field: Joseph, in the centre, had twenty-two thousand French troops, of whom seventeen thousand could assemble round their standards, besides nearly an equal number of Spaniards around Madrid, the greater part of whom could in case of need be joined to the columns of Marmont: while the army of the north, under Marshal Bessières, and subsequently General Caffarelli, amounted to the enormous number of a hundred and two thousand men, of whom seventy-seven thousand foot and eleven thousand horse were present with the eagles. In addition to this, reinforcements to the amount of eighteen thousand men were on their march, who actually entered Navarre in August and September of this year; so that the

* See Appendix, A, Chap. lxvi.

united force to which the British were opposed in the autumn of 1811, was not less than two hundred and forty thousand men actually in the field.* Supposing a hundred thousand of this immense force to have been absorbed in guarding the fortresses, and keeping up the communications, which probably was the case, there would have remained a hundred and forty thousand men, who, by a combined effort, might have been brought to bear against Wellington, without relinquishing any other part of Spain, or nearly triple the force which he could by possibility oppose to them.† And these were not raw conscripts or inferior troops, but the very flower of the imperial legions, led by the best marshals of the empire, comprising that intermixture of the steadiness of veterans with the fire of young troops, which, it is well known, is most favourable to military success: and they proved themselves capable, at Albuera, Badajoz, and Salamanca, of the most heroic exploits.‡

When the magnitude and composition of this force are taken into consideration, and it is recollected that, from the entire extinction of any regular Spanish army in the provinces which it occupied, no serious diversion was to be expected from their exertions, whatever partial annoyance the guerilla parties might occasion—when we call to mind that all the fortresses in the kingdom, with the exception of Cadiz, Carthagena, and Alicante, were in possession of the French generals; that the whole resources of the country were in their hands, and levied with merciless severity for the use of the troops, who were thus entirely taken off the imperial treasury; and that the whole conflict was under the immediate direction of a

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1 Imperial
Muster Rolla,
Nap. iv. 588,
589, taken at
Vittoria.
Wellington
to Lord
Liverpool,
July 18, 1811.
Gurw. viii.
109, 112.

4.
What were
the general
causes which
led to Wel-
lington's suc-
cess.

* Present with the eagles :—

Soult,	67,000
Marmont,	51,000
Joseph,	17,000
Bessières,	88,000
Reinforcements,	17,000

240,000

† This calculation coincides with that of Soult, made at the time in a letter to Joseph, even after twenty thousand men had been lost to France by the battle of Salamanca. "If your Majesty should collect the army of Aragon, the army of Portugal, and that of the Centre, and march upon Andalusia, 120,000 men will be close to Portugal." This was excluding any part of the immense army of the North, full sixty thousand strong, of whom thirty thousand at least were disposable.—SOULT to JOSEPH, August 19, 1812, taken at Vittoria.

—See NAP. v. 236.

‡ See Appendix, B, Chap. lxvi.

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ruler unequalled in the ability with which he always brought his vast resources to bear on the vital point of the campaign ; it becomes an object of the highest interest to inquire how it was that the British were in a condition to maintain their ground at all in the Peninsula, against such overwhelming multitudes ; and still more, how it happened that, laying aside the defensive, they were enabled to dislodge this vast array from the whole strongholds of the country, and finally to drive them, like chaff before the wind, over the Pyrenees, into the south of France.

5.
There must
have been
more than
the merit of
Wellington
and his
troops.

Such an inquiry cannot be satisfactorily answered by merely referring to the military talents of Wellington, and the extraordinary gallantry of his followers. For, granting their full weight to these certainly most important elements in the contest, they could not effect an impossibility, which the discomfiture of such a host by so small a body of assailants would at first sight appear. Experience, as Wellington himself remarked, has “never, at least in later times, realised the stories which all have read, of whole armies being driven by a handful of light infantry and dragoons ;” and even the most sincere believer in the direction of human affairs by a Supreme power, cannot doubt that, humanly speaking, there is much truth in Moreau’s assertion, that “Providence favours the strong battalions.” There must, it is evident, have been some causes, in addition to the bravery of the English troops, and the great abilities of their chief, which brought about this marvellous deliverance ; and it is in their discovery that the great usefulness and highest aim of history are to be found. Such an inquiry can form no detraction from the merits of the British hero : on the contrary, it will lead to their highest exaltation ; for no great revolutions in human affairs can be brought about but by the concurring operation of many general causes ; and it is in the perception of the incipient operation of these causes, when hidden from the ordinary eye, and contrary to those in action on the surface, and their steady direction to noble purposes, that the highest effort of military or political intellect is to be found.

I. The first circumstance which gave an advantage to

Wellington, and compensated in some degree the vast superiority of the enemy's force, was his central situation, midway between the widely scattered stations of the French generals, and the powerful citadel, stored with all the muniments of war, and resting on that true base of British military operations, the sea, which lay in its rear. Grouped at the distance of two hundred miles from the ocean, on either bank of the Tagus, with a secure retreat by converging lines to the strong position of Torres Vedras, ascertained by dear-bought experience to be all but impregnable, the English troops were in a situation to threaten either Ciudad Rodrigo and the forces of Marmont in the north, or Badajoz and the vanguard of Soult in the southern parts of the Peninsula. At the time when they were most widely severed from each other, the forces of Beresford or Hill in Estremadura, and Wellington himself in Beira or on the Agueda, were not distant by more than sixty or seventy miles, and could, if hard pressed, unite in a few days; whereas the French troops, after the occupation of Andalusia, were scattered over an immense line, more than five hundred miles in length, stretching from the mountains of Asturias to the ramparts of Cadiz; and nearly two months must elapse before they could combine in any common operations. The force under Marmont, immediately in front of Wellington, was not superior to his own army in strength; and its means of obtaining subsistence, and keeping considerable bodies of men together, were, from the desert nature of the plains of Leon, much inferior. Thus, by uniting with Beresford on the south of the Tagus, or calling him to his own standard on the north, he had a fair chance of striking a serious blow before the distant succour necessary to avert it could be collected from the banks of the Douro or the Guadalquivir. It was by a similar advantage of a central position between his widely separated enemies, that Frederick the Great so long resisted, on the sands of Prussia, the distant armies of Austria and Russia converging from the Vistula and the Elbe; that Napoleon, on the banks of the Adige and in the plains of Champagne, so successfully warded off the redoubtable blows prepared for him by the slow tenacity of the Austrian councils; and that the consul Nero, in the second Punic war, effected

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6.
His central
position in
the Penin-
sula.

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7.
Great diffi-
culties of the
French from
the want of
subsistence.

the deliverance of Italy, and changed the fate of the world, by taking advantage of the interior line of communication which separated the forces of Hannibal in Apulia from those of his brother Hasdrubal on the banks of the Po.*

II. The circumstances of the British armies in respect of supplies afforded another advantage to the English general, of which he did not fail to avail himself, and in regard to which he was much more favourably situated than his antagonist. The country from Madrid to the Portuguese frontier, and especially towards the Alentejo. was reduced by the devastations and grinding contributions of the French armies to an almost continuous desert; the peasants had for the most part abandoned their possessions, and joined the guerilla parties, with

* The most perfect example of the wonderful effect of a skilful use made of an interior line of communication, by a force inferior upon the whole, but superior to either taken singly, is to be found in the march of the consul Nero, from the ground which he occupied in front of Hannibal in Apulia, to the Metaurus in the plain of Lombardy, where he met and defeated the great Carthaginian army under Hasdrubal, and thereby turned the fate of Carthage and of the ancient world. The march and plan of the consul Claudius Nero are admirably narrated in the following passages from Livy; and they are singularly instructive, as showing how exactly similar his plan of operations was to that which has justly acquired for Napoleon the admiration of the world:—

“Inter hæc ab Hasdrubale, postquam a Placentiæ obsidione abscessit, quatuor Galli equites, duo Numidæ, cum literis ad Hannibalem missi, quum per medios hostes totam ferme longitudinem Italiæ emensi essent, dum Metapontum cedentem Hannibalem sequuntur, incertis itineribus Tarentum delati, a vagis per agros pabulatoribus Romanis ad Q. Claudium prætorem deducuntur. Eum primo incertis implicantibus responsis, ut metus tormentorum admotus fateri vera coegit, edocuerunt, liberas se ab Hasdrubale ad Hannibalem ferre. Cum his literis, sicut erant, signatis, L. Virginio tribuno militum ducendi ad Claudium consulem traduntur, duæ simul turmæ Samnitium præsidii causâ missæ. Qui ubi ad consulem pervenerunt, literæque lectæ per interpretem sunt, et ex captivis percontatio facta; tum Claudius, non id tempus esse reipublicæ ratus, quo consillis ordinariis provinciæ suæ quisque finibus per exercitus suos cum hoste destinato ab senatu bellum gereret, audendum aliquid improvisum, inopinatum, quod cœptum non minorem apud cives, quam hostes terrorem faceret, perpetratum in magnam lætitiâ ex magno metu verteret; literis Hasdrubalis Romanæ ad senatum missis, simul et ipse Patres conscriptos quid pararet, edocet, ut, quum in Umbriâ se occurrurum Hasdrubal fratri scribat, legionem a Capuâ Romanæ accessant; delectum Romæ habeant; exercitum urbanum ad Narniam hosti opponant. Hæc senatus scripta. Præmissi item per agrum Lavinatensem, Marrucinum, Frentanum, Præstutianum, quâ exercitum ducturus erat, ut omnes ex agris urbibusque commentus paratos militi ad vescendum in viam deferrent, equos jumenta que alia producerent, ut vehiculorum fessis copia esset. Ipse de toto exercitu civium sociorumque, quod roboris erat, delegit, sex milia peditum, mille equites: pronunciat, occupare se in Lucanis proximam urbem Punicumque in eâ præsidium velle; ut ad iter parati omnes essent. Profectus nocte flexit in Picenum. Et consul quidem, quantis maximis itineribus poterat, ad collegam ducebat, relicto Q. Catio legato, qui castris præesset.

Nero postquam jam tantum intervalli ab hoste fecerat, ut detegi consilium satis tutum esset, paucis milites adloquitur. Negat ullius consilium imperatoris in speciem audacius, re ipsâ tutius fuisse quam suum. Ad certam eos se victoriam ducere. Quippe ad quod bellum collega non ante, quàm ab satietate ipsius pedi-

which all the mountain ridges abounded,* deeming it better to plunder others than be plundered themselves; and to such a pitch had their penury risen, that the imperial generals were in all the provinces under the necessity of sending to France, in spring 1811, for seed-corn, to prevent cultivation from being altogether abandoned.† The consequence was, that the French armies approaching the Portuguese frontier either from the south or the north, were unable to keep together in large bodies for any considerable time; and whether the object for which they were assembled had failed or been accomplished, they were equally compelled to separate into distant and widely separated provinces to seek the means of subsistence. They were thus continually experiencing the truth of Henry the Fourth's saying, "That in Spain, if you make war with a small force you are beaten, if with a large one, starved."‡

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rum atque equitum datæ ab senatu copiæ fuissent majores instructioresque, quam si adversus ipsum Hannibalem iret, profectus sit, eo ipsos, quantumcumque virium momentum addiderint, rem omnem inclinatos. Auditus modo in acie (nam, ne ante audiretur, daturum operam) alterum consulem et alterum exercitum advenisse, haud dubiam victoriam facturum. Famam bellum conficere, et parva momenta in spem metumque impellere animos. Gloriæ quidem ex re bene gestâ partæ fructum prope omnem ipsos latoiros. Semper quod postremum adjectum sit, id rem totam videre traxisse. Cernere ipsos, quo concursu, quâ admiratione, quo favore hominum iter suum celebretur."—LIVY, lib. xxvii. cap. 43, 45.

* "The whole country between Madrid and the Alentejo is now a desert, and a still smaller proportion of land than before has been cultivated this winter. The argument of the people of the country is, that it is better to rob than to sow and have the produce of their harvests taken from them; and the French begin to find, that they cannot keep their large armies together for any operation which will take time, and that, when we can reach them, they can do nothing with small bodies."—WELLINGTON to LORD LIVERPOOL, 4th December 1811.—GURWOOD, viii. 422.

† "Famine had made such ravages over the whole Peninsula in the winter of 1812, that grain was wanting to sow the ground; and the generals-in-chief in Andalusia, La Mancha, Catalonia, and Old Castile, wrote to Berthier to request him to forward seed-corn from France."—BELMAS, *Journ. des Sièges dans la Péninsule*, i. 223.

‡ "Such was the destitution of the country," says Marmont, "on the Portuguese frontier, that in April 1811, the army of Portugal lost its whole artillery and great part of its cavalry horses in six days, between the Coa and the Agueda, of absolute famine. I arrived at the headquarters of the army of the north in January last. I did not find a single grain of corn in the magazine, not a sou in the military chest; nothing any where but debts, and a real or fictitious scarcity, of which it is hardly possible to form an idea, the natural result of the absurd system of administration which had been adopted. Provisions, even for each day's consumption, could be obtained only by arms in our hands: there is a wide difference between that state and the possession of magazines which can enable an army to move. On the other hand, the English army is always united and disposable, because it is supplied with money and the means of transport. Seven or eight thousand mules are employed in the transport of its means of subsistence. The hay which the English cavalry consumes on the banks of the Coa and the Agueda, comes from England."—MARMONT to BERTHIER, 26th Feb. 1812; BELMAS, *Journ. des Sièges dans la Péninsule*, i. 629, 632. *Pièces Just.*

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8.

Advantages
of the English
from the
command of
the navigable
rivers.

On the other hand, although Wellington experienced nearly the same difficulties, so far as the resources of the country were concerned, yet he had means of overcoming them which the enemy did not enjoy. Of specie, indeed, he often had little or none: but the credit of the country, his own strenuous exertions, and the efforts of government, went far to obviate this great disadvantage. Not only was the wealth of England applied with lavish, though sometimes misguided prodigality, to the support of his army, and supplies of all sorts brought by every wind that blew to the harbour of Lisbon,—although the extraordinary difficulty of procuring specie from England, or the means of transport in the country, often exposed him to extreme difficulties on the Spanish frontier,—but the great rivers of the Douro, the Mondego, and the Tagus, gave him the inestimable advantage of *water carriage* to a considerable distance in the interior. The former of these rivers was navigable for boats of large burden to within eighty, the Mondego to within a hundred miles of the frontier on the Agueda; and Wellington took measures, which came into operation in March 1812, which rendered the Douro navigable as far as its junction with that lesser stream. This was an immense advantage, especially when the attack of fortified places was to be undertaken on the Portuguese frontier; for the principal French magazines were on the Douro and the Tormes, and their battering-train and stores required to be brought from Madrid or Bayonne, the former of which was above two hundred, the latter more than three hundred and fifty miles from the scene of action. Whereas the stores of the English, even when carried to Ciudad Rodrigo or Badajoz, had only to be conveyed a hundred miles by land carriage, not half the distance. It was in a great measure from a consideration of this advantage that Wellington, in December 1811, wrote to Lord Liverpool: “Our situation is improving, and whatever may be the fate of Valencia, if the Spanish nation hold out, I think they may yet be saved.”¹

¹ Wellington
to Lord
Liverpool,
Dec. 5, 1811.
Gurw. viii.
421, 422.
Nap. iv. 365.

III. The French generals, following out the established imperial system of making war maintain war, and wrenching the whole expenses of the troops out of the provinces which they occupied, had inflamed im-

mensely the general irritation felt at their rule; and the misery and despair which their exactions produced had augmented to a fearful degree the guerilla bands over the whole country. We have the authority of Mariano d'Orquijo, home secretary to Joseph, for saying, that the great increase of the guerilla parties, especially in Leon, Navarre, and the two Castiles, in the years 1810, 1811, and 1812, arose from the establishment of provincial governments, and the innumerable acts of extortion practised on the inhabitants by the French military authorities.* This mode of providing for themselves was reduced to a perfect system by the imperial generals. A fixed sum was imposed on the inhabitants, and levied from them with merciless severity under the terrors of military execution; and to such a degree of perfection had long practice brought the French troops in this oppressive art, that they contrived to subsist, and to levy all the resources which they required, out of districts which any other army would have considered as absolutely exhausted. The soldiers were every where trained themselves to reap the standing corn, and grind it by portable mills into flour; if green, they mowed it down with equal dexterity for their horses; if reaped, they forced it from the peasants' place of concealment, by placing the bayonet to their throats. In this way, they were, to a very late period of the war, when the general ruin of agriculture forced them to rely in some degree on magazines, entirely relieved from all care about communications or supplies, which to the English general, who paid for every thing that was consumed by, or required for his troops, often proved a matter of excessive difficulty.†

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9.

General interruption of the French communications by the guerillas.

1 Nap. v. 147, and Wellington to Lord Bathurst, July 21, 1812. Gurw. ix. 298.

* "His Majesty could cite a crowd of instances of oppression which have exasperated the minds of the inhabitants, furnished arms to the insurrection; and given the English grounds for supposing projects which really did not exist, and rendering the war interminable. Let the number of brigands and insurgents in Spain be counted, and it will at once be seen how much they have increased since the institution of the military governments. It is the decree of 8th February 1810, establishing military governments in Navarre, Biscay, Aragon, and Catalonia, that is the real cause of the war still continuing, and the flames of discord having again risen up after they seemed extinguished."—*The Minister of State D'ORQUIJO to the DUKE DE SANTA FE, Madrid, 12th Sept. 1810, taken at Vittoria.* See NAPIER, iv. 517, 523.

† "The army of Portugal," said Wellington, "has been surrounded for the last six weeks, and scarcely even a letter reaches its commanders; but the system of organised rapine and plunder, and the extraordinary discipline so long established in the French armies, enable it to subsist at the expense of the total ruin of the country in which it has been placed; and I am not certain that

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10.

Hatred of the
French. Its
great effects
on the war.

But, on the other hand they paid dearly for this advantage in the unbounded exasperation which their extortions excited among the whole rural population, and the universal partisan warfare which they aroused in the flanks and rear of every considerable detachment. The consequence was, not merely that guerilla chiefs sprang up in every quarter where the shelter of mountains rendered pursuit difficult, and under Mina and Duran in Navarre, the Empecinado in the Guadalaxara mountains, the curate Merino in Leon, and Il Pastore on the coast of Biscay, kept alive the war, and did incredible mischief to detached bodies of the enemy; but smaller bodies called *Partidas* hovered every where round their flanks and rear, and almost entirely obstructed their communication with each other. On the other hand, the regularity with which the English always paid for all the supplies required for their army, rendered them so popular with the rural population, that they brought information and intercepted letters with incredible diligence and rapidity to headquarters, and kept the British general always as well informed of his adversaries' movements as they were ignorant of his. Thus Wellington, from his central position on the Portuguese frontier, was enabled to select his own time and place for an attack. His preparations were to a surprising degree unknown to the enemy, who, as already more than once remarked, had seldom any means of communicating with each other; and not unfrequently a serious blow was struck before they were even aware that preparations for it were going forward.¹

¹ Wellington to Lord Liverpool, Dec. 4, 1811. Gurw. viii. 422.

11.

Jealousy and
discord of the
rival French
powers in the
Peninsula.

IV. The strange and impolitic division of the government of Spain which Napoleon had made, rendered it absolutely impossible that any thing approaching to a regular or united plan of operations could be carried on against an enemy. Not only was the central dominion of the crown at Madrid set at nought by the authority of the Emperor, who, from Paris, overruled and directed all the military operations, and yet left to the phantom king the shadow of power and the reality of responsibility; but all possibility of a cordial union between him

Marshal Marmont has not now at his command a greater quantity of provisions and supplies of every kind than we have from Lisbon."—WELLINGTON to LORD BATHURST, 21st July 1812; GURWOOD, ix. 298.

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and his lieutenants was destroyed by the unexampled, and, to a sovereign, highly grating distribution of the resources of the country which the Emperor had established between them. The whole revenues of the provinces were assigned to the French generals, with all the contributions which, by the most rigorous military execution, they could extract from the wretched inhabitants; while the king in the capital was left with the burden of a court, the expenses of which he had no means of defraying except the pension of a million of francs (£40,000) a-month which he received from France; and even that was, in the later stages of the contest, exclusively devoted to the payment of the troops, leaving the monarch himself utterly destitute. The consequence was that the king and his court were reduced to such straits, that the royal councillors were seen begging their bread from door to door. Joseph himself was compelled to pawn his plate to raise the money required to purchase the necessaries of life; and Marshal Jourdan, major-general of the armies, after borrowing till his credit was exhausted, could with difficulty procure common subsistence.^{1*}

Such being the state of the court of Madrid, it is not surprising that the most bitter animosity should prevail between the king and the marshals in the provinces, who seemed placed there only to usurp his authority, and intercept his revenue. His letters to Napoleon, during the whole of his reign, are accordingly filled not only with the bitterest complaints of his own sufferings, but with positive accusations of treason against his lieutenants, especially Soult, whom he openly charged with aspiring to the throne of Andalusia.† But it was all in vain. The power of the sword was irrevocably vested

12.
Miserable
straits to
which Joseph
was reduced
at Madrid.

* "I am in such distress," said Joseph, "as never king was before. My plate is sold—my ministers and household are actually starving—misery is in every face, and men otherwise willing are deterred from joining a king so little able to support them—my revenue is seized by the generals for the supply of their troops. I cannot, as a King of Spain, without dishonour, partake of the resources thus torn by rapine from my subjects, whom I have sworn to protect. I cannot, in fine, be at once King of Spain and General of the French. Let me resign, and live peaceably in France. The Marquis Cavalles, a councillor of state and minister of justice, has been seen actually begging for a piece of bread."—JOSEPH to NAPOLEON, April 11, 1813, taken at Vittoria.—NAPIER, v. 444, 445.

† See confidential letter of the DUKE DE FELTRE to JOSEPH, Paris, 10th November 1812; and COLONEL DESPERS to JOSEPH, 22d September 1812, taken at Vittoria.—NAPIER, v. Nos. 5 and 6, Appendix; and v. 197, Text.

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¹ Nap. iv.
347.13.
Discord of
the marshals
among them-
selves.

in these rigorous taskmasters ; and when Joseph, on one occasion, in desperation laid his hands on a large magazine of corn collected near Toledo, Marmont immediately sent troops, who recovered the magazine by force, telling the owners of the grain they might apply to the monarch for payment.¹

Nor was it only with the King of Spain that the French marshals, wielding the whole military power of the country, were then at variance. There was no cordial union or co-operation among themselves, and they wanted that indispensable preliminary to military operations — unity of design and implicit obedience among the commanders employed. Each, accustomed to regal state and authority in his own province, and looking to the Tuileries only for the instructions he was to obey, felt his vanity mortified, and his consequence lessened, when he was called upon to act in obedience to, or even to co-operate on equal terms with, any of his brother marshals. To such a height did this discord rise, that Ney was put under arrest by Massena, during the retreat from Portugal, for direct disobedience of orders ; and no subsequent military operation of any length was undertaken by any two of the marshals jointly, till the victories of Wellington forced them into one still disunited mass after the battle of Salamanca. Soult remained in Andalusia living in regal magnificence on the banks of the Guadalquivir, and deeply engaged in great designs for that province, from which he was only occasionally diverted by the advances of the British in Estremadura. Bessières, openly condemning both the retention of Badajoz and the siege of Cadiz, found himself so occupied with the protection of the great communication in the north, from the increasing vigour of the Biscay and Navarre guerillas, as to be able to lend only a casual aid to the army of Portugal ;* while Marmont, at the head

* “ All the world is aware of the vicious system of our operations : every one sees that we are too much scattered. We occupy too wide an extent of country : we exhaust our resources without profit and without necessity : we cling to dreams. Cadiz and Badajoz will swallow up all our resources : Cadiz, because it will not be taken : Badajoz, because it can only be supported by an army. The only safe course would be to destroy the one, and abandon, for the moment, all thought of the other. We should concentrate our forces ; retain certain *points d'appui* for the protection of our magazines and hospitals : and regard two-thirds of Spain as a vast battle-field, which a single victory may either secure to or wrest from us, until we change our whole system, and seriously set about pacifying and conquering the country. We have not a man on the coast,

of that force, was immediately exposed to the attacks of Wellington, without any cordial support either from the army of the centre in his rear, or the distant columns of Soult or Bessières on either flank.

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When the English general assumed the offensive, and the period of disaster began, the French commanders mutually laid the blame on each other: Joseph loudly accused them of selfish regard to their separate interests; while Napoleon, who could ill brook reverses of any kind, thundered out his censure in such cutting terms from the Tuileries or, Russia against them all, as made the greater number of them tender their resignations, and gave rise to a constant and rapid change of commanders on the exposed frontier at the most critical period of the war. Each marshal was solicitous chiefly for the protection of his own province, with the safety of which he was intrusted, and in which the foundations of his fortune or his ruin were laid; and when the king applied to either for succour, the answer he got from Soult or Suchet was, that he might come to Seville or Valencia, but that they could spare no aid to him. Wellington, on the other hand, though at the head of far inferior forces, singly commanded them all. Experience had taught him the impracticability of any co-operation with the wretched armies of Spain; and, relying on his own British and Portuguese alone, he trusted, by unity of operation and the superiority of a central position, to obtain advantages over forces, in number triple his own, but disseminated over an immense surface, and disjointed by separate interests and variety of direction.*

14.
Vast effects
of this discord
among Napo-
leon's gene-
rals.

V.—But beyond all doubt, the most powerful ally which Wellington had in the prosecution of his operations against the French generals in the Peninsula, was to be found in the oppressive manner in which they were constrained by Napoleon to carry on the war, and the incredible excesses of cruelty to which they had recourse to maintain their soldiers, and repress the hostility which

15.
Desperate
hostility pro-
duced by the
cruelty of the
French.

from Roussillon to Barcelona: Valencia is the centre of all the insurgents of the north and centre, and still we are besieging Cadiz."—BESSIÈRES to BERTHIER, 6th June 1811; BELMAS, *Appendix*, No. 73, vol. i.

These views were highly displeasing to Napoleon, who a few months after superseded Bessières in the command of the army of the north; but they were far sounder than the Emperor's own, and he lost the Peninsula by not adopting and adhering to them.

* See *Pièces Just.*, in BELMAS, *Journaux des Sièges*, i. 530-657.

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the exactions, every where going forward, had excited in all the provinces. When it is recollected, indeed, that nearly four hundred thousand French soldiers were permanently quartered on the Spanish territory, and had been so now for three years; that during the whole of that time this immense body had been paid, fed, clothed, and lodged at the expense of the conquered districts, who had already been exhausted by the contributions of their own troops and guerillas, and devastated by all the horrors of war during four successive campaigns; it becomes rather a matter of astonishment how they contrived to extract any thing at all in the end from a country so long exposed to such devastations, than that their rapine could be levied only by the last atrocities of military execution. As it was, however, the systematic rigour and cruelty with which they enforced their exactions, were as unparalleled in modern warfare as their enormous amount was unexampled. It has been already noticed that, by his own admission, Suchet, whose civil administration was incomparably the least oppressive of that of any of the French generals in the Peninsula, contrived to extract eight millions of francs annually from the war-wasted province of Aragon, or more than double what it had yielded in the most flourishing days of the monarchy,* and that two millions sterling were at once levied from the small province of Valencia on its conquest; and, judging of the comparative weight of his requisitions and those made by others, from the flourishing aspect and general submission of his province compared with the ravaged features and fierce resistance which were every where else exhibited, we may safely conclude that his exactions were not to half the amount of those which were elsewhere experienced. It was this oppressive system of military contributions, thus adopted by the French commanders, and invariably acted upon from the very outset of the revolutionary war, and not the passing devastations of the soldiers, that was the principal evil which provoked so universal a spirit of hostility to their government.

The English soldiers at times plundered just as much as their opponents, and perhaps, from their habits of intoxication, and the inferior class in society* from which

* *Ante*, Chap. lxx. § 56, and SUCHET, I. 280-286.

they were drawn, they were on such occasions more brutal in their disorders than the French. But there was one difference between the two, and it was a vital one to the inhabitants of the conquered countries. The English plunder was merely the unauthorised work of the common men, and was invariably repressed by the officers when order was restored; the whole supplies for the troops being paid with perfect regularity from the public funds of government: whereas the French exactions were the result of a systematic method of providing for their armies, enjoined by express command upon all the imperial generals, and forming the groundwork of the whole military policy of Napoleon. In the case of the former, when discipline was restored, all military oppression ceased, and the presence of the army was felt only in the quickened sale for every species of produce which the inhabitants enjoyed, and the immense circulation of money which took place: in that of the latter, the more thoroughly that military subordination was established, the greater was the misery which prevailed around the soldier's cantonments, from the greater perfection which the system of methodical robbery had attained. And this difference appeared in the clearest manner when they respectively quitted the countries which they had long occupied. When Soult abandoned Andalusia, of which he had enjoyed the whole resources for three years, such was the universal destitution which prevailed, though the country was the richest in Spain, and had not seen any serious invasion during that time, that the French armies of the south, the centre, and Portugal, had received no pay for one, the civil servants, none for two years; whereas the wealth which had been poured into Portugal by the British army, during the same period, was so enormous, that it had far more than counterbalanced all the devastations of Massena's invasion, and all the sacrifices of the long protracted contest.¹*

But, oppressive as were the exactions of the French

* "The French discipline is founded upon the strength of the tyranny of the government operating upon an army, the majority of whom are sober, well disposed, amenable to order, and in some degree educated. They live by the *authorised and regulated plunder* of the country, if any should remain: they suffer labour, hardships, and privations every day: they draw no money from France, and go on without pay, provisions, money, or any thing; but they lose, in consequence, half their army in every campaign."—WELLINGTON to LORD WELLESLEY, January 26, 1811; GURWOOD, vii. 188.

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16.
Difference between the English plunder and the French exactions.

¹ Nap. v. 280.
Wellington to Lord Liverpool. Nov. 3, 1810.
Gurw. vi. 552, and vii. 188.

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17.
Dreadful
severity of
the French
military
decrees.
Aug. 13,
1810.1 See procla-
mation,
Dec. 28,
1809. Belm.
i. 429.2 See decree,
June 6, 1811.
Belm. i. 567.18.
Frightful
cruelty of
Bessières'
Proclama-
tion.

armies, the severity of the military executions by which they were levied, and the infamous cruelty of the imperial decrees by which it was attempted to suppress the insurrections to which they gave rise, were still more instrumental in producing the general and increasing hostility to their authority which characterised the later years of the war. Not only did Soult in Andalusia issue and act upon a proclamation, directing "no quarter to be given to any of the Spanish armies or armed bands; and all the villages where any resistance was attempted, to be delivered to the flames;"* but Augereau, in Catalonia, announced "that every man taken with arms in his hands should be hung, without any form of process, by the highway; every house from which resistance was made should be burned, and every inhabitant in it put to the sword;"¹ and Bessières in the north issued and enforced decrees unparalleled, it is to be hoped, in modern warfare, for the cold-blooded atrocity in which they are conceived. By the first of these it is declared, that "the clergy, alcaldes, curés, and justices of every village, shall be responsible for the exact payment of the contributions, and the furnishing the whole requisitions ordered by the military authorities. Every village which shall not immediately execute the orders which it has received, or furnish the supplies demanded, shall be delivered over to military execution; and every individual convicted of stimulating the people to withstand or delay obedience to the French orders for supplies and requisitions, shall be forthwith delivered over to a military commission."²

By the second decree, still more infamous, it was announced, that "*the fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, children, and nephews* of all individuals who have quitted their domiciles, and do not inhabit the villages occupied by the French, shall be held responsible, *in their persons and effects*, for all acts of violence committed by the insurgents; that if any inhabitant is carried off from his domicile, three of the nearest relations of *some brigand* shall be arrested as hostages, and shot if the individual is put to death; that every person who shall be absent eight days without permission shall be considered as a brigand, and *his relations* proceeded against in terms of

* *Ante*, Chap. lrv. § 49.

this decree ; that every person not provided with a *carte de sûreté* shall be immediately sent to prison ; every one found corresponding with the insurgents put to death ; and every one writing to the inhabitants of a country occupied by them, sentenced to ten years' imprisonment." ¹ It was reserved for the armies of a power which began the contest with the cry of war to the palace and peace to the cottage, and which professed the most unbounded philanthropy, especially towards the poor, to push, in the nineteenth century, the responsibility for alleged transgressions beyond the utmost limits assigned to them by the jealous tyranny of Imperial Rome ; and to denounce the punishments proclaimed, as a penalty not against subjects revolting against their acknowledged sovereign, but against foreign citizens striving for the independence of their country, and discharging what they had themselves a thousand times justly styled the most sacred of human duties.

When such were the principles of war, not casually acted on by ungovernable troops in a moment of fury, but deliberately announced and methodically enforced by the imperial marshals for years together, it is not surprising that an uncontrollable thirst for revenge should have seized a large portion of the Spanish nation. Such, accordingly, was the case from the moment that the decrees establishing the military governments were issued in February 1810. The excessive rigour with which the contributions were every where levied, and the crushing weight with which they fell upon the peasantry, filled the guerilla ranks, as well from the bereavements which they occasioned, as the destitution which they produced. They brought the bitterness of conquest home to every cottage in the kingdom ; they drove the iron into the soul of the nation. Revenge, that "wild species of justice," gained possession of every heart. If you inquired into the private history of the members of any of the guerilla bands, it uniformly recounted some tale of suffering. One had had his father murdered by the French soldiers at the threshold of his home ; another had seen his wife violated and massacred, or his children butchered before his eyes ; a third had lost both his sons in the war ; a fourth, burnt out of house and home, had joined the

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¹ Proclamation of Duke of Istria, (Bessières.) June 5, 1811. Belm. i. 563.

19.

General partisan resistance which this oppression produced.

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bands in the mountains as the only means either of gaining a livelihood or wreaking vengeance. All in one way or other had been driven by suffering to forget every other feeling but the remembrance of their woes, and the determination to revenge them. Incredible were the obstacles which this state of things threw in the way of the French army; vain the attempt by severity to extinguish a spirit which found in the excesses of that very severity the principal cause of its increase. Already in June 1811, Marshal Bessières had bitterly experienced the woful effect of the sanguinary policy which he had pursued.* So formidable did this insurrection become in the course of 1812, that it engaged, as will appear in the sequel, the anxious attention both of Napoleon and his generals, and by degrees absorbed nearly the whole

Dec. 14, 1811. army of the north, seventy thousand strong, in a murderous and inglorious partisan warfare. Mina retaliated in Navarre by a counter-proclamation, in which in an equally sanguinary but more excusable spirit, because it was in self-defence only, he declared that no quarter should be given to the French troops.†

20. Extraordinary difficulties which this partisan warfare imposed on the French.
 In the midst of this terrible warfare, it was with the utmost difficulty that the main line of communication from Madrid to Bayonne could be kept open. Fifty thousand men were required to guard it, and, independent of the great fortresses of Pampeluna and San Sebastian, and the fort of Burgos, nineteen fortified posts or blockhouses, each garrisoned by three or four hundred men, were erected on the line from the Bidassoa to the

* "It is time to take a decided part: the army of the north is composed, it is true, of forty-four thousand men: but, if you unite twenty thousand together, all communication ceases, and the insurrection makes great progress. The coast will soon be lost as far as Bilbao. We are destitute of every thing: it is with the greatest difficulty we can live from day to day. The spirit of the country is frightful. The journey of King Joseph to Paris—the retreat from Portugal—the evacuation of the country as far as Salamanca—have elevated their minds to a degree I cannot express. The bands enlarge and recruit daily at all points."—MARSHAL BESSIÈRES to BERTHIER, June 6, 1811; BELMAS, I. 560.

† "Navarre," said Mina, in the preamble of this proclamation, "is covered with desolation: every where tears are shed for the loss of the dearest friends: the father sees the body of his son hanging for having had the heroism to defend his country: the son witnesses with despair his father sinking under the horrors of a prison, for no other reason than that he is the parent of a hero who has fought for his native land. The mayors, the nobles, the priests, have been all ruined or conducted in captivity into France. All our efforts to introduce a more humane system of warfare, by showing generosity to our captives, have proved nugatory: there remains only the duty of retaliation."—*Proclamation by ESPÓZ Y MINA, December 14, 1811; BELMAS, I. 564.*

capital; eleven on the more circuitous route by Valladolid, Segovia, and the Guadarama; fifteen on the road from Valladolid to Saragossa; eight from Valladolid to Santander; and so on through the whole kingdom.¹ Thus Spain was overspread by a vast iron net, constructed at an enormous expense, and upheld by an incredible expenditure of men and treasure. But though it was sufficient, except in the mountain districts, to chain the inhabitants and prevent any serious insurrection, yet it absorbed a large proportion of the French troops, and was attended with a great and ceaseless consumption of life to the invaders; so that Wellington did not over-estimate its importance when, in December 1811, he wrote to Lord Liverpool: "The people of the country are still disposed to resist whenever they see a prospect of advantage. Buonaparte is yet far from having effected the conquest even of that part of the Peninsula of which he has military possession; and in truth, the devastation which attends the progress of our enemies' arms, and is the consequence of their continuance in any part of the country, *is our best friend, and will in the end bring the contest to a conclusion*."²

But if such were the difficulties—arising partly from the nature of the country which was the seat of war, partly from the absurd distribution of power in the Peninsula by Napoleon, and partly from the oppressive and exterminating mode of conducting war which the Revolution had established—with which the French generals had to contend, Wellington on his part did not recline on a bed of roses; the obstacles which thwarted his operations, though arising from different causes, were nearly as great as those with which his antagonists had to strive; and it is hard to say whether an impartial survey of their relative situations does not leave his superiority as great, as if his vast inferiority of force and unbroken career of victories were alone considered.

The first and most important circumstance which constantly thwarted all the English general's efforts for the deliverance of the Peninsula, was the long-established and incurable corruption of every part of the Portuguese administration. This deplorable evil, the sad bequest of

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¹ Belm. i.
xii. Introd.

² Wellington
to Lord
Liverpool.
Dec. 4, 1811
Gurw. viii.
424.

21.
Wellington's
difficulties.

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22.

Corruption
and imbecility of the
Portuguese
administra-
tion.

ages of despotism, had not at that period been counter-balanced in the dominions of the house of Braganza, by the feverish and sometimes almost supernatural energy which, in a democratic convulsion, springs from the temporary ascendant of poverty, and the unrestrained career of passion. Portugal had lost its monarch and regular government; its rulers owed their election in a great degree to popular choice, and the country was in the most violent state of general excitement. But the convulsion, as Wellington often observed, was anti-Gallican, not democratic; the old influences still pervaded every department of the administration; and that fearful vigour was wanting which invariably appears when uncontrolled power is for the first time vested in the masses, and the people enjoy the dangerous prerogative of laying impositions on property, from the operation of which they are, from their poverty, entirely exempted. Hence the government and whole administration were corrupt and imbecile, to a degree which appears almost inconceivable to those who have either experienced the permanent vigour of monarchical, or the transient energy of democratic states. So inveterate were abuses in every department, that the people could not conceive any administration without them; and when the soldiers enrolled under British command received the full pay promised them, their astonishment knew no bounds, they having never, under their native officers, known what it was to have less than one-half or two-thirds absorbed by the peculation of those through whose hands the money passed.¹

¹ Wellington
to the Prince
Regent of
Portugal.
April 1813.
Nap. v. 422.

23.

Imbecility
with which
the regency
at Lisbon dis-
charged their
duties.

Had Wellington possessed the same unlimited power in the civil as he did in the military affairs of Portugal, these abuses would speedily have been corrected; but, unfortunately, this was very far indeed from being the case. His direct authority extended only to the command of the armies; and although his influence was, doubtless, considerable with the regency at Lisbon, and he was most ably seconded by the British ambassador there, the Honourable Charles Stuart,* yet his efforts to effect an amelioration in the public service, and communicate the requisite vigour to the administration, were perpetually

* Now Lord Stuart de Rothsay, the British ambassador at St Petersburg.

thwarted by the inability of its members to comprehend his views; the extraordinary difficulty of reforming, amidst the din of external war, long-established domestic abuses; and the constant dread which the regency had of interfering with existing emoluments, or adopting any measures of compulsion against inferior functionaries and magistrates, lest they should endanger their own popularity. Their nervousness on this last head was such as to render government perfectly powerless, either in enforcing the laws or drawing forth the resources of the country; and all the remonstrances of Wellington were unable to make them even adventure upon the very first duty of executive administration, that of making inferior officers do their duty. The consequence was, that though the taxes were very heavy, they were most irregularly collected, and the rich and privileged classes discovered a thousand ways of evading them. Ample levies of men were voted; but no adequate measures were ever taken to bring forth the soldiers, or send them back if they had left their colours.¹

The army in the field was seldom more than half the number for whom pay was drawn; clothing, ammunition, provisions, and stores of all sorts, were constantly wanting for the troops; the means of transport were rarely provided for them, and never in time; and even the English subsidy for the support of thirty thousand men, which was regularly advanced, was so much diverted to other objects, that the pay of the men was almost always in arrear; and in April 1813, the army in the field had received no pay for seven, the garrison troops for nine, the militia for fifteen months. The consequence was, that Wellington was obliged to feed the Portuguese troops from the British magazines; and this, in its turn, impoverished the resources, and paralysed the efforts of the British army.* Had these evils occurred in the French armies,

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1811.

¹ Wellington to Prince Regent of Portugal, April 9, 1812. Gurw. ix. 52, and viii. 6, 7.

24.
Wretched state of the troops in the field.

* "The unfortunate governments in the Peninsula had been reduced to such a state of decrepitude, that there was no authority in Spain or Portugal before the French invasion. The French invasion did not improve this state of things; and since that event no crime that I know of has been punished in either, excepting that of being a French partisan. Those malversations in office—those neglects of duty—that disobedience of orders—that inattention to regulation which tend to defeat all plans for military operation, and ruin a state that is involved in war more than all the plots of French partisans, are passed unnoticed, notwithstanding the numerous complaints which Marshal Beresford and I have made. The cause of all this is the mistaken principle on which the

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their generals would speedily have applied a remedy by taking the supplies wanted by force, and sending the owners to the regency for payment ; but such a proceeding would have been altogether repugnant to the English mode of carrying on war. It was abhorrent to the nature of Wellington, and the principles on which he was conducting the contest ; and if adopted, he was well aware it would have purchased present relief by the sacrifice of all the grounds on which he hoped for ultimate success. Thus the evils continued through the whole campaigns. Remonstrance and representation were the sole remedies relied on ; the whole of this gigantic civil conflict in his rear fell on the English general, as always ensues in such cases ; and not unfrequently he was engaged in presence of the enemy, and within sight of their videttes, in lengthened yet vain memoirs on the most complicated details of Portuguese civil administration.¹

¹ Nap. v. 422,
423. Well.
to Prince
Regent of
Portugal.
Well. to
Stuart.
April 9, 1812.
Gurw. ix. 52,
and viii. 6, 7.

25.
Wretched
condition of
the Spanish
troops, and
jealousy of
their gene-
rals.

The next circumstance which paralysed on repeated occasions the operations of the English general, and this often at the most critical moments, was the wretched condition and total destitution of the Spanish armies, and the pride and obstinacy which rendered their generals unreasonably jealous of foreign interference, and equally averse to and incapable of any joint measures by which a material or durable benefit to the common cause could be obtained. Such, indeed, were the inefficiency and destitution of the Spanish forces, that it was soon discovered that their presence was a burden rather than an advantage to the Anglo-Portuguese troops, by bringing into the field a host of useless assistants, who were incapable of render-

government have proceeded. They suppose the best foundation for their power is a low vulgar popularity, of which the evidence is the shouting of the mob at Lisbon, and the regular attendance at their levees ; and to obtain this bubble, they have neglected the essential duty of making inferior functionaries do their duty, which, if done, would ere this have saved both countries. On the same principle, they will not regulate their finances, because it interferes with some man's job. They will not lay on new taxes ; because none who do so are ever favourites with the mob. They have a general income-tax of ten and twenty per cent ; but no one has yet paid a hundredth part of what he ought to have done. Thence, from want of money, they can pay nobody. The hire of mules and carts is never paid ; the horses die, and the people desert ; the commissaries have no money to buy provisions, or provide the means of transport ; and thence the troops are constantly suffering ; and as I will not allow pillage, every department of the service is paralysed. In consequence, I have been obliged to incorporate the Portuguese troops with the English divisions, and both are paid from one military chest ; but the evil exists in its full extent with the detached corps and garrison."—WELLINGTON to COLONEL GORDON, 12th June 1811 ; GURWOOD, viii. 6, 7.

ing any effectual service in the field against the enemy, and who yet devoured all the resources by which the war could be maintained. So great were these evils found to be that, after the experience of the Talavera campaign, Wellington formed the resolution, from which he never afterwards deviated, of engaging in no joint undertaking whatever with the Castilian armies; but, trusting to them merely for distant diversions, determined to rely upon his own British and Portuguese forces alone for any operations in the front of the conflict. In fact, after the battles of Ocaña and the Tormes, in the close of 1809,* no Spanish force worthy of the name of an army existed within the sphere of the English operations; and on the only subsequent occasion on which necessity compelled a junction of the British and Spanish in the field—at

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1811.

Albuera, in 1811—the former only escaped a bloody defeat, induced by the obstinacy and intractability of the Spanish generals, and the unwieldy character of their troops, by the surpassing valour of the English soldiers, and the shedding of torrents of English blood.†

At a subsequent period of the war, the lustre of Wellington's victories, and the universal voice of all men of sense in the Peninsula, which loudly demanded that he should be put at the head of the whole military operations, compelled the Cadiz government, much against their will, to appoint him generalissimo of all the armies; and the increased vigour and efficiency which, in spite of every difficulty, he speedily communicated to them, clearly demonstrated of what benefit it would have been to the common cause if he had been earlier elevated to the supreme command. But at the stage of the contest we are at present engaged with, he was not only thwarted by the frequent jealousy of the Spanish generals, one of whom,

26.
Treachery of
the Cortes.

* *Ante*, Chap. lxii. § 59, 63.

† "Your Excellency may depend upon the truth of what I have repeatedly had the honour of stating to you in conversation, that until the Spanish armies shall possess regular resources, by which they can be supplied during any operation which they may undertake, and are equipped in such a manner that casual or trifling difficulties will not impede their operations; and until the troops are disciplined, as all other troops are which are to meet an enemy in the field, it is useless to think of plans of co-operation between this army and those of Spain, which must be founded on the active offensive operations of all parts of the armies of all the three nations. I should deceive myself and you, and the governments of both nations, if I were to encourage such a notion; and if I were to undertake the execution of such a plan I should risk the loss of my army for no object whatever."—WELLINGTON to CASTANOS, 24th July 1811; GURWOOD, viii. 133.

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Ballasteros, was so mortified at his appointment, that he resigned his command in disgust, and wellnigh occasioned the loss of the whole fruits of the battle of Salamanca ; but he found his influence and usefulness interrupted by treason and disloyalty in the seat of government itself. So fiercely, indeed, had the passions of democracy now begun to burn at Cadiz, that, in their animosity at the orderly spirit of aristocratic rule in England, the republican leaders forgot the whole evils and wrongs of French invasion ; and at a period when the deliverance of the Peninsula was no longer hopeless, but reasonable grounds for expecting it had arisen from the heroic efforts of the English troops, and the approaching hostility of the northern powers, a secret negotiation was going on between Joseph and a considerable proportion of the Cortes, for the delivery of Cadiz to the French troops, and the submission of the whole Peninsula to the imperial government. They were willing to concede every thing, and acknowledge the Napoleon dynasty, provided the democratic constitution of 1812 was recognised.²

² Nap. v.
82, and 406,
407.

27.
Their ad-
vances to,
and prepara-
tions to join
the French.

This conspiracy, suspected at the time, and since fully demonstrated by the documents which have been brought to light, soon made its effects apparent from the undisguised hostility which the Cortes manifested towards Wellington and the English army : the occasional excesses of the soldiers were magnified by the voice of malignity ; their services were forgotten, their great deeds traduced ; the contagion had reached some of the generals of the armies, who were prepared to pass over with their troops to the enemy ; and nothing but the unbroken series of Wellington's victories, and the loud voice of fame which heralded his exploits, prevented the government of the Cortes, on the eve of the deliverance of their country from the hands of the spoiler, from blasting all the glories of the contest which it had so heroically maintained, by uncalled-for submission and shameless treachery at its termination. Many persons in the Cortes held secret intercourse with Joseph, with the view of acknowledging his dynasty, on condition that he would accede to the general policy of the Cortes in civil government. Early in 1813, the Conde de Montejo, then a general in Elío's army of Murcia, had secretly made propositions to pass over, with the forces

under his command, to King Joseph: and soon afterwards the whole army of the Duke del Parque, which had advanced to La Mancha, made offers of the same nature. They were actually in negotiation with Joseph, when the Emperor's orders obliged the French army to abandon Madrid and take up the line of the Ebro.¹

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1811.
¹ Nap. v. 406,
407.

The last circumstance which, throughout his whole career, impeded the operations of Wellington, and had often wellnigh snatched victory from his hand when almost within his grasp, was the extraordinary difficulty which the English government experienced, especially in 1811, in procuring supplies of provisions and money for his army, and the very limited amount of reinforcements in troops which the circumstances of the British empire, or the apprehensions of ministers, allowed them to send to his support. The circumstances have been already fully detailed* which had at that juncture, to an unprecedented degree, reduced the resources of the empire. It was, in truth, the crisis of the war. Both England and France were suffering immensely from their mutual blockade; and the contest seemed reduced to the question who should starve first. At such a time the closing of the American harbours and the vast markets of the United States to the productions of British industry, added to the calamity of an unusually bad harvest, which required nearly five millions sterling to be sent out of the country for the purchase of subsistence, not only rendered it almost an impossibility for the government to send to Portugal either specie or provisions, but made it a matter of extraordinary difficulty for the English general to obtain from any quarter supplies for his army.²

28.
Extreme
penury of the
English army
in money
during the
war.

² Nap. v. 50.

His correspondence, accordingly, during the whole of his campaigns, but especially in the years 1810 and 1811, is filled with accounts of the difficulties which he experienced in getting provisions and the means of transport, and the backwardness of government in making the requisite remittances; and not unfrequently, in the bitterness of his heart at finding his best-laid schemes rendered abortive by the want of perhaps an inconsiderable sum in ready money, or a few stores in siege equipage, sharp complaints escaped him at the incapacity of the admin-

29.
Wellington's
loud com-
plaints of his
want of
specie.

* *Ante*, Chap. lxiv. § 112-120: and Chap. lxv. § 113, 114.

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1811.

¹ Well. to
Spencer
Perceval,
Esq. June 6,
1835. Nap.
v. 56.

^{30.}
Foundation
for Welling-
ton's com-
plaints.

istration, which, engrossed with its parliamentary contests, left undone the weightier matters of the war.* But in cooler moments, and on a just retrospect of the extraordinary difficulties with which government, as well as himself, had to struggle at that crisis, the candour of Wellington's nature modified the censure which the anxiety of the moment had called forth: he admitted that it was the want of money, that is, of specie, which was felt during the war; but that commodity, from the effect of the Bank restriction, was then exceedingly scarce in England, and frequently could not be procured at all; and that he had uniformly received the most cordial support and encouragement from the ministers, without excepting Mr Perceval, "than whom a more honest, zealous, and able minister never served the King."¹

In truth, however, the complaints of Wellington were not altogether unfounded; and there can be no doubt that his confidential letters to Mr Stuart, the English ambassador at Lisbon, written at the time, must be regarded by history as documents on which more reliance should be placed than subsequent general recollection, at the distance of five-and-twenty years, when the difficulty was over, and unequalled success had gilded the retrospect of the past with perhaps unfaithful colours. Even at the moment, however, when the contest was going on,

* The greater part of these complaints will be found quoted in Napier's *Peninsular War*, v. 52-54: Counter Remarks, *infra*: and they are scattered through all Gurwood's *Correspondence*.

As a specimen the following extracts may be given:—*April 20, 1810.*—"The Ministry are as much alarmed as the public, or as the Opposition pretend to be: the state of public opinion is very unfavourable to the war; and the general opinion is, that I am inclined to fight a desperate battle which is to answer no purpose. Their private letters are in some degree at variance with their public instructions: and they throw upon me the whole responsibility of bringing away the army in safety, after staying in the Peninsula till it becomes necessary to evacuate it. But it will not answer, in these times; to receive private hints and opinions from ministers; which, if attended to, would lead to an act directly contrary to the spirit, and even the letter of the public instructions."² *June 5, 1810.*—"This letter will show you the difficulties under which we labour for want of provisions, and of money to buy them. The miserable and pitiful want of money prevents me from doing many things which might and ought to be done for the safety of the country—yet, if any thing fails, I shall not be forgiven."³ *December 22, 1810.*—"It is useless to expect more money from England, as the desire of economy has overcome even the fears of ministers, and they have gone so far as to send home the transports, in order to save money."⁴ *July 26, 1811.*—"The soldiers in the hospitals die because the government have not money to pay for the hospital necessaries; and it is really disgusting to reflect upon the distresses occasioned by the lamentable want of funds to support the machine we have put in motion."⁵ There are a great many letters to the same effect.

² Well. to
Stuart.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

Wellington expressed to Mr Stuart his strong sense of the extraordinary efforts which the British government was making to supply the wants of the army, as well as the discreditable manner in which they were impeded by the selfishness of the Portuguese administration. "The Portuguese government," says he, "ought to be aware of the difficulties in which Great Britain is involved in order to procure, not money's worth, *but money—specie—* to maintain the contest, of which the probable want alone renders the result doubtful. In order to avoid this want, they are *making the most gigantic efforts*, at an enormous expense, to send to this country every article that an army can require, in hopes to save the demand for, and expenditure of specie, in the purchase of these articles in the country; and yet the Portuguese government, instead of seconding their laudable efforts, set themselves against them."¹ Although, therefore, he was often most grievously hampered by the want of gold and silver coin, and driven to every imaginable resource to procure supplies, by his own exertions, for his army; yet his difficulties arose from other and more general causes than any want of zealous co-operation on the part of the English government; and, without entirely exculpating them from blame in allowing their attention to be more engrossed by their parliamentary struggles than the Peninsular contest, it may safely be affirmed that these causes were the following:—

Though the contest had now continued nearly eighteen years, the English government were still, thanks to our insular situation and invincible navy, mere novices in the art of military warfare: and the subordinate functionaries in every department required literally to be taught their several duties in the presence of the enemy. There is nothing surprising in this; it is the natural result of the peculiar circumstances, unassailable power, nautical habits, popular government, and commercial character of the English people. Though naturally brave, and always fond of military renown, they are the reverse of warlike in their ordinary habits. Naval supremacy has long since made them trust to their wooden walls for defence; commercial opulence opened more attractive pursuits than the barren heritage of the sword. In peace they inva-

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LXVI.
1811.

¹ Wellington
to Stuart,
Aug. 27,
1811. Gurw.
viii. 222.

31.
Uniform
neglect by the
British of
warlike pre-
parations in
time of peace.

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1811.

riably relax the sinews of war : no amount of experience can persuade them to take any antecedent measures either to avert disaster or to ensure success : they constantly expect that, without the least previous preparation, and with greatly inferior numbers, their armies, newly raised, uninstructed, and inexperienced, are to vanquish their enemies in every encounter. And the extraordinary valour of the Anglo-Saxon race has so often in pitched battles more than compensated every other disadvantage, that the result seems almost to justify the anticipation.

32.
Great error
in the Eng-
lish mind on
this subject.

But though in a regular fight native bravery may often make amends for the absence of military instruction or matured preparation, it is otherwise with the varied duties of a protracted campaign. Skill and experience on the part of all engaged in the vast enterprise are there indispensable ; and for their want no amount of talent in the general, or of courage in the troops, can afford any compensation. An army, if brave and well disciplined, may often vanquish a more experienced, but less sturdy antagonist, in the field ; but it will prove no match for him in marching, retreating, finding provisions, or enduring the long-continued fatigues of a campaign. The same array which has successfully emerged from the perils of the battle-field, may ingloriously melt away amidst the accumulated horrors of ill-arranged hospitals ; the courage which can mount the deadly breach, may be rendered wholly unavailing by the bluntness of intrenching tools, or the shortness of scaling-ladders ; and the fruits of a mighty victory, capable of changing the fate of the world, may be reft from the conquerors by the incapacity of commissaries in bringing up supplies, or the remissness of government in furnishing a few pieces of heavy artillery. Wants of this sort were those which Wellington so often and bitterly experienced in the course of the Peninsular campaign. Every person in the army, with a very few exceptions, from the general to the drummer, was at first ignorant of a great part of his most necessary duties ; and the commander-in-chief was obliged himself to attend to the minutest details in every department, under the penalty of seeing his best laid projects miscarry from

the ignorance or incapacity of those to whom some subordinate duties had been committed.

Every one who has been intrusted with the responsibility of directing new and inexperienced public servants in any department, must in the outset have encountered this difficulty. It may be conceived, then, with what weight it pressed on a general at the head of an army taking the field for the first time, on any extended scale, for a century, and filled with officers and civil functionaries to whom experience was unknown, and on whose theoretical instruction no pains whatever had been bestowed. In the battle-field, or evolutions in presence of the enemy, their native steadiness and admirable discipline rendered them from the very outset adequate to any emergency; but how small a portion of the life of a soldier do such events occupy, and how much does military success in the end depend upon other and less dazzling qualities, in which long experience had rendered the French perfect proficient! The commissariat was at first ignorant of its duties, and often failed in procuring supplies at the critical moment; the health of the soldiers, especially those newly sent out, frequently suffered dreadfully; and the military hospitals, charged sometimes with twenty thousand sick at a time, fostered contagion rather than cured disease.* the inebriety of the soldiers amidst the wines of the south too often aggravated the tendency to malaria-fever which arose from the death-bestrodden gales of Estremadura; the engineers were able and instructed, but the troops were unskilled in the labour of the trenches, the working tools often insufficient, the mining chisels blunt and useless, and the battering ordnance worn out or inadequate; and these obstacles, perpetually marring the general's operations at the most vital moment, could only be overcome by shedding torrents of heroic blood. This universal ignorance is not to be wondered at: it ensues inevitably in a nation whose power has superseded the necessity of military experience, and whose temper has discouraged the military art.¹

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33.

Universal in-
experience of
interior func-
tionaries.

* The total number of sick and wounded who passed through the military hospitals of Portugal, from 1808 to 1814, amounted to the enormous number of three hundred and sixty thousand men.—SIR JAMES M'GREGOR'S *Evidence before the House of Commons*.

¹ See Wellington in Gurwood, *passim*.

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1811.

34.
Causes which
led to these
obstacles to
Wellington's
success.

The ministry shared in the general deficiencies. Trained for the most part to civil professions, they were generally unfit to judge of military arrangements; they yielded the management of the war to professional men of old standing, frivolous habits, capacity inferior to their own, and often immersed, from long inactivity, in a flood of insignificant details; and the pressing concerns of parliament, with the general conduct of government, left them little leisure to acquire, when in harness, the information requisite for a vigorous and enlightened prosecution of the cabinet duties connected with the military department. Above all, they were, to an extent which now appears almost inconceivable, unaware of the vital importance of *time* in war: they almost always attended in the end to the general's requests; but they often did so at a period when the season for gaining the important effects anticipated from them had passed: they combined operations so as to favour his designs, but they not unfrequently marred these minor enterprises by the incapacity of the untried officers whom they placed in command, and whom court favour or parliamentary influence had forced into these situations.

35.
Causes of this
general ignorance.

It is in vain to ascribe these unhappy arrangements to the fault of any particular body of men then intrusted with the reins of government; they obviously arose from general causes, for they characterise equally the first years of every contest in British history. Many a Byng has been morally executed for faults really owing to the constitution of his country: many a Burgoyne has capitulated, because the means of salvation were not, through popular heedlessness, or the universal parsimony, save in presence of danger, of popular assemblies, put into his hands. If foresight and wisdom in previous preparation, commensurate to their vigour and resolution when warmed in the contest, had been given to democratic societies, the English people in modern, as the Roman in ancient times, must long since have obtained the empire of the world. Instead, therefore, of ascribing peculiar blame to any one class in the British islands for the manifold difficulties with which Wellington had to struggle in the first years of the contest, let us regard them as the inevitable consequence of previous neglect

and long-continued security on the part of the whole empire; and let this reflection only enhance our admiration of the hero whose resolution and sagacity prepared, and the army, whose bravery and perseverance secured, the means of overcoming all these obstacles, and brought the British army in triumph to the walls of Paris.

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1811.

But on considering the comparative weight of the difficulties with which the British and French generals had to contend in this memorable contest, one observation applies to them all, eminently characteristic of the conflicting principles on which it was conducted, and the antagonist powers which were there brought into operation on the opposite sides. The French, by disregarding every consideration of justice or humanity, forcibly wrenching from the vanquished people their whole resources, and extracting from their own countrymen, by the terrors of the conscription, all the physical force of sixty millions of subjects or allies, had obviously the advantage in the outset; and the chances were very great, that before the English could gain any solid footing in the Peninsula, they would be driven from it by a concentration, from all quarters, of overwhelming forces. This, accordingly, was what had happened in all the previous campaigns of the British during the war; and it had been prevented from again occurring only by the admirable foresight with which the position of Torres Vedras had been chosen and strengthened.

36.
The British
difficulties
greatest in
the beginning.

But, on the other hand, when the first brunt of the imperial onset had been withstood, and the contest was reduced to a series of protracted campaigns, the balance became more even, and at length, by the natural reaction of mankind against oppression, inclined decisively in favour of the British general. The English method of procuring supplies by paying for them, though extremely costly, and far less productive at first than the French mode of taking possession of them by force, proved in the end the only one which could permanently be relied on, for it alone did not destroy in consumption the means of reproduction. The English system of procuring men for the army by voluntary enlistment, though incapable of producing the vast arrays which were mustered by the

37.
The French
difficulties
greatest in
the end.

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conscription round the imperial standards, did not exhaust the population in the same degree, and permitted the British armies to be progressively increased to the close of the contest, while the French, in its latter stages, declined in a fearful progression. The English principle of protecting the inhabitants as far as it was possible, amidst the miseries of war, though in the beginning extremely burdensome, in comparison of the summary methods of spoliation and rapine invariably practised by the French, proved in the long run the most expedient ; for it alone conciliated the affections, and husbanded the resources of the people, by whose aid or hostility the contest was to be determined. It is precisely the same in private life : the rapacity of the robber, or the prodigality of the spend-thrift, often outshine in the outset the unobtrusive efforts of laborious industry ; but mark the end of these things, and it will be found, that in the long run honesty is the best policy, and that the fruits of rapine, or the gains of dishonesty, ultimately avail as little to the grandeur of nations as to the elevation of individuals.

38.
Commence-
ment of the
first siege of
Badajoz.

April 17.

May 5.

Having taken his determination to act on the offensive against the French in Spain, and to endeavour in the outset to recover the important fortress of Badajoz, Wellington moved his headquarters in the middle of April to Estremadura, taking with him twelve thousand men to reinforce General Beresford, who had previously begun the campaign in that province, and had made himself master, after a few days' siege, of Olivenza, with its garrison of four hundred men. Badajoz was immediately thereafter blockaded ; but the great floods of the Guadiana prevented any serious operations being commenced against it till the first week of May, when, the communications across the river having been effected, the town was invested on both banks. Soult no sooner heard of the enterprise, than he began to collect troops at Seville for its relief ; and on this occasion, the deficiencies of the English army, in all the knowledge and preparations requisite for a siege, were painfully conspicuous. All the zeal and ability of the engineer officers, and they were very great, could not compensate the wants of an army which had at that period no corps of sappers and miners in its ranks, nor a single private who knew how to carry

on approaches under fire. A double attack was projected—one on the castle, and another on the fort of St Christoval; and on the night of the 8th, ground was broken at the distance of four hundred yards from the latter. A bright moon, however, enabled the enemy to keep up a destructive fire on the working parties. A vigorous sally two days afterwards was repulsed with loss; but the Allies, pursuing too far, were torn in flank by a discharge of grape-shot from the ramparts, which in a few minutes struck down four hundred men; and though the besiegers continued their operations with great perseverance, the fire of St Christoval was so superior, that four out of five of the guns placed in the trenches were speedily dismounted. On the 12th, ground was broken before the castle, and a battery commenced against the *tête-du-pont*; but before any progress could be made in the operations, intelligence was received that Soult was approaching; and Beresford instantly and wisely gave orders to discontinue the siege, and assemble all the forces in front to give battle.¹

Having by great exertions collected all his disposable forces in and around Seville, this indefatigable marshal had set out on the 10th from that capital, and joining Latour Maubourg on the road, made his appearance at Villa Franca and Almendraledo on the 14th, having in four days cleared the defiles of the Sierra Morena, and transported his troops from the banks of the Guadalquivir to the streams which nourish the Guadiana. On the 15th, he moved forward his advanced guard, occupying the heights in front of ALBUERA, where Beresford's army was concentrated. The force which was here at the disposal of the English general was considerable in numerical amount; but in composition, with the exception of the British, it was very inferior to the homogeneous veterans of the French marshal. General Blake arrived from Cadiz with nine thousand men early on the morning of the 16th; Castanos, with three thousand, chiefly horse, was also at hand; and Don Carlos d'España's men, who had still kept their ground in the northern slopes of the Sierra Morena since the rout of Medellin, swelled the Spanish force to sixteen thousand men, of whom above two thousand were cavalry. The Anglo-Portuguese force, consisting of two divisions and Hamilton's Portuguese brigade, num-

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May 8.

May 10.

May 12.

¹ Nap. iii.

523, 527.

Vict. et Conq.

xx. 235.

Jones, Pen.

War, i. 381,

385.

39.

Forces of the
opposing
armies at
Albuera.

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¹ Beresford
to Wellington,
May 18,
1811. Gurw.
vi. 573. Nap.
iii. 528, 532.
Vict. et Conq.
xx. 235, 236.
Tor. iv. 66,
67. Hamil-
ton's Pen.
Camp. iii. 83.

bered seven thousand British, and eight thousand Portuguese sabres and bayonets ; so that the Allies, upon the whole, had in the field thirty thousand men, of whom three thousand were horse, with thirty-eight guns ; but of these the English alone could be relied on for the decisive shock. Soult's force was inferior in numerical amount, being only nineteen thousand infantry and four thousand cavalry ; but they were all veteran troops, whom Napoleon justly termed "the finest in Europe," and he had fifty guns admirably harnessed and served ; so that, in real military strength, his force was decidedly superior to that of his antagonist.¹

40.
Description
of the field of
battle, and
the French
and English
positions.

Beresford, to whom Castanos, with a delicacy and forbearance very unusual at that period in the Spanish generals, had relinquished the command of the Allied army, had drawn up this motley array on the heights lying to the north of the Albuera streamlet, with the right thrown back in a semicircle, so as to guard against his flank being turned in that quarter, where still higher eminences rose beyond the extremity of the line. The British divisions, commanded by Cole and Stewart, were in the centre, on either side of the great road from the village of Albuera to Badajoz and Valverde, where the principal attack was anticipated : to the right of these stood Hamilton's Portuguese ; while Alten, with his brave brigade of Germans, occupied the village and bridge of Albuera, in advance of the centre of the whole line ; the right was strongly occupied by the Spaniards under Blake, whose position, on a line of heights, promised to render their unwieldy bulk of some service in making good the position. The French army, according to their usual custom, was arrayed in dense masses, partly in the wood on the south of the Albuera stream, partly on the open ground to their north, and in advance both of the Albuera stream and Ferdia rivulet, which ran along the foot of the heights on the Allied right. Soult, seeing that Beresford had neglected to occupy the high ground which commanded the whole field beyond his extreme right, in order to strengthen his centre commanding the great road, resolved to make his principal attack in that quarter ; and with this view, during the night, unknown to the English general, and under the screen of that lofty

height, concentrated his principal forces, consisting of Gerard's corps, Latour Maubourg's cuirassiers, and Rutý's guns, in all fifteen thousand men, with forty pieces of artillery, on the southern slope of the great hill, within half a mile of Beresford's right, but screened entirely from their view. The remainder of his forces, consisting of Werle's division, Godinot's brigade, the light cavalry, and twelve guns, were arrayed in the wood to the south of the Albuera stream; the bridge over which, with the village of the same name, was to be the object of an early attack, to distract the enemy's attention from the powerful onset preparing against them under cover of the lofty eminence on the right.¹

The action began early on the morning of the 16th, by a strong body of cavalry who were seen to cross the Albuera stream, opposite the Allied right, while Godinot's division, preceded by ten guns, issued from the wood, and bore down upon the bridge. The British guns in the centre, immediately opening upon the moving mass, ploughed through its columns with great effect; but the brave assailants pressed on, while their cannon answered the English fire; and, crowding towards the bridge in great numbers, they were soon warmly engaged with Alten's Germans at that important point. As the Hanoverians were soon pressed by superior numbers, Beresford advanced a Portuguese brigade to their support. A Spanish battery, placed on a height near the church, played warmly on all the approaches to the bridge: the French artillery thundered back without intermission, but with less effect; and the enemy made no material progress in that quarter. Perceiving, however, that Werle's division did not follow in the footsteps of Godinot's, Beresford justly concluded that the real attack was not intended at the village; and despatched Colonel Hardinge to Blake to warn him that a serious onset might immediately be expected on the right, and entreating him to throw back his line and face outwards, so as to be prepared to receive it. The Spanish general, with characteristic obstinacy, refused to credit the information, and declined to endanger his troops by moving them in presence of the enemy. Colonel Shepeler, however, an intelligent German officer, who was serving as a volunteer in the Spanish staff, and has since

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¹ Nap. iii.
532, 533.
Beresford's
Despatch.
Gurw. vii.
574. Vict. et
Conq. xx.
236, 237.

41.
Battle of
Albuera.
May 16.

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written a valuable history of the war, was of the opposite opinion ; and fixing his eyes steadily on the right, while Blake and Castanos were engrossed only with the attack on the bridge, at length showed them the glancing of deep columns of bayonets in the interstices of the wood in that direction. Yielding reluctantly to the evidence of his senses, Blake upon this ordered the requisite change of front ; the second line of Spaniards was moved forward and drawn up at right angles to the first, thus forming a bar across the extremity of the line, perpendicular to its direction, exactly as took place with the Russians in the middle of the battle of Eylau.¹*

¹ Nap. iii.
534, 536.
Tor. iv. 68.
Vict. et Conq.
xx. 238, 239.
Hamilton, iii.
84, 85.

42.
The French
accumulate
their forces
on the right,
and force the
Spanish posi-
tion.

Before, however, this critical movement could be completed, the enemy, in appalling strength, were upon them. Werle, as Beresford had foreseen, no sooner saw Godinot's leading battalions engaged at the bridge, than, leaving a few troops to connect the lines together, he rapidly counter-marched to the westward, and issuing from the wood, joined the rearguard of Gerard's corps as it was mounting the hill on the right of the Allies ; while at the same time the light cavalry, quitting Godinot's column, forded the Albuera, and ascending the hill at the gallop, joined the already formidable mass of Latour Maubourg's cuirassiers, who stood opposite to the British heavy dragoons under Lumley. Thus, while the Spanish line was going through the difficult operation of changing its front, it was attacked by fourteen thousand infantry, four thousand noble horse, and forty pieces of cannon. The contest was too unequal to be of long duration. Though such of Blake's troops as had got to their ground before the enemy were upon them, opposed a stout resistance, and for some time kept the assailants at bay, yet their line was irregular and confused when the firing began ; huge gaps were visible, into which the French cavalry poured with irresistible force ; Rutty's guns, now playing within point-blank range, threw the moving regiments into confusion ; and after a short and sanguinary struggle, the Spaniards were overthrown at all points, and the whole heights on which they stood fell into the enemy's hands, who immediately placed their batteries there in position,²

² Nap. iii.
535, 536.
Beresford's
Despatch,
Gurw. vii.
374. Tor. iv.
68, 69. Vict.
et Conq. xv.
238, 239.

in such a manner as to command the whole field of battle.

The day seemed worse than doubtful ; and Soult, thinking that the whole army was yielding, was concentrating his reserves, and arranging his cavalry, so as to be able to convert the retreat into a rout, when Beresford, seeing the real point of attack now clearly pronounced, ordered up the British divisions from the centre to the scene of danger on the right. This order was instantly obeyed : the lines fell back into open column, and with a swift and steady step moved to the right, up the heights, from which the tumultuous array of the Spaniards was now hurled in wild confusion. But before they had reached the summit, a dreadful disaster, wellnigh attended with fatal consequences, befell them. The morning, which had throughout been cloudy and unsettled, at this time broke into heavy storms of wind and rain, accompanied with thick mists, under cover of one of which the French advance against the Spanish position had been effected. Another moment of darkness of the same description proved as fatal to the British as it had been favourable to their antagonists. When General Stewart, with the leading brigade of the second English division, still in column, arrived at the slope of the height which the French had gained, and had got through the Spaniards, he opened a heavy fire upon the enemy from the front rank ; but, finding they could not be shaken by musketry, immediately ordered a charge of bayonets ; and the regiments were in the act of deploying for that purpose, when they were suddenly and unexpectedly attacked in rear, and in great part destroyed, by two regiments of hussars, and one of Polish lancers, which had got round their flank unobserved during the mist. The 31st alone, which still remained in column, resisted the shock ; but the remainder which had got into line, or were in the act of deploying, consisting of the Buffs, the 66th, and the second battalion of the 48th, were instantly pierced in many different quarters by the lancers from behind, and almost all slain on the spot, or driven forward into the enemy's line and made prisoners. Seven hundred men and three standards fell into the hands of the cavalry :¹ in the tumult of success they charged the second line coming

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43.
Dreadful disaster of the British division which first got up.

¹ Beresford's Despatch. Gurw. vii. 574. Nap. iii. 536, 537. Hamilton, iii. 86. Vict. et Conq. xx. 241, 242. Tor. iv. 69, 70.

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up ; and such was the confusion there from this disaster, that Beresford himself only escaped being made prisoner by his great courage and personal strength, which enabled him to parry the thrust, and dash from his saddle a lancer, who in the affray assailed him when alone and unattended by his suite.

44.
Gallant attempt to retrieve the day by Houghton's brigade.

All seemed lost : for not only were the heights, the key of the position, taken, and crowned with the enemy's infantry and artillery, but the British brigade, which had advanced to retake them, had almost all perished in the attempt to do so. With the troops of any other nation it would probably have been so ; but the English were determined not to be defeated, and it is surprising how often such a resolution in armies, as well as in individuals, works out its own accomplishment. The Spaniards, incapable of perceiving the change which had taken place in the action, continued to fire with great violence directly forward, although the British were before them ; and no efforts on the part of Beresford could induce them either to advance a step or cease their discharges ; while the succeeding columns of the English threw in their volleys, in like manner, on the Spaniards, and endangered Blake himself. But amidst all this confusion the unconquerable courage of the British, by a kind of natural instinct, led them to the enemy, and retrieved the disasters of the day. The 31st, under Major L'Estrange, isolated on the heights it had won in the midst of enemies, still maintained its ground, and kept up, now deployed into line, a murderous fire on Gerard's dense columns, by which it was assailed. Dickson's artillery speedily came up to the front ; and, firing with prodigious rapidity, covered the advance of Houghton's brigade, who ere long got footing on the summit, and formed in line on the right of the 31st. The remainder of the second division, under Abercrombie, shortly after pressed gallantly forward and took post on its left, while two Spanish corps also came up to the front ; and Lumley's horse-artillery, on the extreme right, by a most skilful and well-directed fire, kept at a distance the menacing and far superior squadrons of Montbrun's cuirassiers.¹

¹ Kausler, 640. Nap. iii. 537. Vict. et Cong. xx. 241. Tor. iv 70, 71.

Still the combat, though more equal, was far from

being re-established. The British troops, in mounting the hill, were exposed to a dreadful fire of grape and musketry from the French guns and masses at the summit; hardly half of any regiment got to the top unhurt; Houghton himself fell while nobly heading and cheering on the 29th in the van; Duckworth of the 48th was slain; while the 57th and 48th, which next came up, and opened into line in the midst of this terrific fire, soon had two-thirds of their numbers struck down by the fatal discharges of the enemy's artillery. But this combat of giants was too terrible to be of long duration: the French, though suffering enormously in their dense formation, stood their ground gallantly; neither party would recede an inch, though the fire was maintained within pistol-shot; and a deep though narrow gully, which ran along the front, rendered it impossible in that direction to reach the enemy with the bayonet. At this awful crisis the ammunition, from the rapidity of the discharges, failed; in some of the British regiments, despite all their valour, the fire slackened; Houghton's brigade, slowly and in firm array, retired: a fresh charge from the now re-assembled Polish lancers captured six English guns; and Beresford, deeming the battle lost, was making preparations for a retreat, and had actually brought up Hamilton's Portuguese brigade from the neighbourhood of the bridge of Albuera into a situation to cover the retrograde movement.²

In this extremity the firmness of one man changed the fate of the day, and in its ultimate effects, perhaps, determined the issue of the Peninsular war. While Beresford, under circumstances which not only justified, but perhaps called for the measure, was taking steps for a retreat, an officer on his staff, endowed with the eye of a general and the soul of a hero, boldly took upon himself the responsibility of venturing one more throw for victory. Colonel, now SIR HENRY HARDINGE,* ordered General Cole to advance on the right with his division, which was still fresh, and, riding up to Abercrombie on the extreme left, ordered him also to bring his reserve brigade into action. Cole quickly put his line, with the

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45.

The British
at the sum-
mit of the
hill begin to
fail.

¹ Kausler,
541, 542.
Vict. et Cong.
xx. 241, 242.
Nap. iii. 537,
539. Beres-
ford's Des-
patch.
Gurw. vii.
574, 575.

46.

Desperate
charge of the
fusilier
brigade,

* Afterwards Governor-general of India, who gained the decisive victory of Soobraon over the Sikhs in February 1846.

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fusilier brigade in the van, in motion, crossed the Aroya streamlet, and mounted the hill on the right; while Abercrombie, with the reserve brigade of the second division, at the same time clearing their way through the throng, ascended on the left. These brave men soon changed the face of the day; and the advance which the enemy had made in the centre against Houghton's brigade proved in its results extremely disastrous, by bringing them into a situation where the *flanks*, as well as the front, of their deep columns were exposed to the incessant fire of the English infantry. It was exactly the counterpart of what had happened to Lannes's column which broke into the middle of the Austrian line at Aspern,* and the terrible British column which all but gained the battle of Fontenoy. Houghton's brigade, in the centre, encouraged by the timely succour, and having received a supply of ammunition from the rear, again faced about, stood firm, and fired with deadly aim on the front of the mass; while the fusilier brigade on one flank, and Abercrombie's on the other, by incessant discharges prevented any of the lines behind from deploying. The carnage, in consequence, was frightful, especially in the rear of the column; and the very superiority of the French numbers magnified the loss, and augmented the confusion, from causing every shot to tell with effect upon the throng. Pressing incessantly on, the fusilier brigade recovered the captured guns, and dispersed the lancers. But a dreadful fire met them when they came near Gerard's infantry: Colonel Myers was killed; Cole himself, and Colonels Ellis, Blakeney, and Hawkshawe fell, badly wounded; and the whole brigade, "staggered by the iron tempest, reeled like sinking ships."¹

¹ Nap. iii.
539, 540.
Vict. et Conq.
240, 251.
Belm. i. 183.
Jom. iii. 505.

47.
Heroic gal-
lantry of the
English in-
fantry gains
the day.

"Suddenly recovering, however," says Colonel Napier, in strains of sublime military eloquence, "they closed on their terrible enemy; and then was seen with what a strength and majesty the British soldier fights. In vain did Soult by voice and gesture animate his Frenchmen; in vain did the hardiest veterans, extricating themselves from the crowded column, sacrifice their lives to gain time and space for the mass to open out on such a fair field; in vain did the mass itself bear up, and, fiercely

* *Ante*, Chap. lvii. § 59.

striving, fire indiscriminately on friends and foes, while the horsemen, hovering on the flanks, threatened to charge the advancing line. Nothing could stop that astonishing infantry. No sudden burst of undisciplined valour, no nervous enthusiasm, weakened the stability of their order: their flashing eyes were bent on the dark columns in their front; their measured tread shook the ground; their dreadful volleys swept away the head of every formation; their deafening shouts overpowered the dissonant cries that broke from all parts of the tumultuous crowd, as foot by foot, and with a horrid carnage, it was driven by the incessant vigour of the attack to the farthest edge of the hill. In vain did the French reserves, joining with the struggling multitude, endeavour to sustain the fight: their efforts only increased the irremediable confusion; and the mighty mass, at length giving way like a loosened cliff, went headlong down the ascent. The rain flowed after in streams discoloured with blood; and eighteen hundred unwounded men, the remnant of six thousand unconquerable British soldiers, stood triumphant on the fatal hill."¹

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¹ Nap. iii. 541.
Vict. et Cong.
xx. 241, 243.
Behm. i. 183.
Jom. iii. 505.

Bercsford, seeing the heights thus marvellously gained, immediately took steps to secure the victory. Blake's first line, which had not yet been engaged, was removed to the village and bridge of Albuera; Alten's Germans, and the whole Portuguese, were thus rendered disposable, and formed a mass of ten thousand men, who advanced up the hill in the footsteps of Abercrombie and the fusilier brigade; while Ballasteros and Zayas, with their Spanish brigades, also pressed on in pursuit. Gerard's corps was soon entirely dissolved; almost all the men threw away their arms, dispersed, and sought for shelter in the wood behind the Albuera stream. Werle's reserve, five thousand strong, was brought up by Soult to cover the retreat; but it was overwhelmed in the flight, and the general himself killed. All, on the admission of the French themselves, was lost, if in that fatal moment the artillery had shared in the general consternation.² But Rutly skilfully drew his guns together, and, emerging through the throng of fugitives, stood forth gallantly in the rear, and by the vigour of his fire arrested the advance of the conquerors. Such

48.
Conclusion of
the battle.

² Vict. et
Cong. xx.
243.

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¹ Jones, i.
387, 388.
Vict. et Conq.
xx. 243, 245.
Nap. iii. 542.
543. Belm. i.
183. Beres-
ford's Des-
patch.
Gurw. vii.
575, 576.

was the rapidity with which the guns were worked, and the precision of their aim, that the Spaniards and Portuguese, advancing in the rear of the British, suffered severely; the British infantry were obliged to wait till their own artillery came up, and meanwhile, the confused masses of the enemy got over the stream and regained the cover of the wood. Montbrun's cuirassiers restrained the Allied cavalry, which repeatedly endeavoured to charge; though, from the advanced position which they assumed to do so, they suffered dreadful losses from the British artillery; and at length this sanguinary contest gradually died away on both sides, rather from the exhaustion of the victors than any means of farther resistance, save in their artillery, which remained to the vanquished.¹

49.
Its results.

Such was the battle of Albüera, memorable as being the most desperate and bloody of any that occurred, not only in the Peninsular, but the whole Revolutionary war. Though the firing had only lasted four hours, eight thousand men had been struck down on the part of the French, and nearly seven on that of the Allies—an amount of loss, which, in proportion to the number of men actually engaged, is unparalleled in modern war, at least on the side of the victors. The Spaniards lost two thousand men, the Portuguese and Germans six hundred, and the British alone four thousand three hundred—a chasm out of seven thousand five hundred English soldiers engaged, which marks clearly upon whom the weight of the contest had fallen. When the Buffs were called together, after the battle, only three privates and one drummer answered to the muster-roll, though great numbers who had been made prisoners, and escaped in the confusion, joined during the night and next day. The unwounded survivors were less numerous than the wounded. All the efforts of the Portuguese videttes, to whom the care of the maimed was intrusted, could not provide for the multitude who required their aid; the streamlets on the field, swollen with the rain, which fell without intermission all night, ran red with human blood; while Blake, soured by his own defeat and the English success, refused to send any assistance to the succour of his bleeding allies.² But, disastrous as was

² Jones, i.
388. Nap. iii.
543, 544.
Beresford's
Despatch.
Gurw. vii.
577, 578.
Hamilton, iii.
87, 90.

the condition of the British, that of the French was still more calamitous: forced to a retreat, they were encumbered by six thousand five hundred wounded, for whose relief no means whatever existed. Eight hundred of these unhappy men fell into the hands of the British, who left five hundred prisoners and one howitzer in the hands of their opponents.

But though the trophies of victory were thus nearly balanced, the result showed decisively on which side success had really been won. For after remaining the next day in the wood from which he had issued in the morning of the battle, Soult on the following night retired towards Seville by the road he had advanced, leaving the British to resume their position undisturbed around the bastions of Badajoz. As soon as it was ascertained that the enemy had retreated, the siege of that fortress was resumed on the left bank of the river, and the light cavalry followed the enemy towards the Sierra Morena, whither Soult was retiring. He left the great road to Seville, and fell back towards Llerena, his cavalry being stationed near Usagre. There, a few days afterwards, they were attacked by the 3d and 4th dragoon guards, supported by Lumley's horse-artillery in front, while Madden's Portuguese cavalry assailed them in flank. The result was, that they were completely overthrown, with the loss of a hundred slain and eighty prisoners. This brilliant affair terminated Beresford's independent operations: Wellington had arrived in person, and taken the command of the siege of Badajoz; Hill, who had returned to Portugal, resumed the command of the second division and the covering army; and Beresford set out for Lisbon, where his influence and great administrative talents were indispensably called for, to restore the dilapidated condition of the Portuguese army.¹

Though Beresford's firmness had not proved equal to the dreadful crisis of the battle itself, yet his resolution in maintaining his ground next day, with the diminished and bleeding remnant of his host, was deserving of the highest admiration, and had the most important effect on the fate of the campaign. Soult had still fifteen thousand veterans unhurt when he retired to Llerena;

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50.
Wellington
arrives, and
takes the
command of
the siege of
Badajoz.
May 18.

May 23.

¹ Nap. iii.
545, 547.
Vict. et Conq.
xx. 249, 250
Belm. i. 184.

51.
Moral re-
sults of the
battle.

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and so strongly had Beresford felt the vast superiority of that force to the handful of British who remained after the battle, that on the evening on which it had occurred, he had written to Wellington, avowing that he dreaded a renewal of the action and a bloody defeat on the succeeding day; although the troops, justly proud of their victory, had crowned the hill which they had won by such efforts with several hundred flags taken from the Polish lancers, where they waved defiance to the enemy. That he had the firmness to make good his post, and brave such a danger, is a memorable instance of moral resolution; while the retreat of Soult, under circumstances when, by persevering, he might have perhaps achieved success, cannot but be considered as a blot in his escutcheon. In truth it afforded the most convincing proof of the ascendancy gained by that extraordinary display of unconquerable intrepidity which the English army had made in this well-debated field, and which encircled their arms with a halo of renown that carried them through all the subsequent dangers of the war. The French military historians are the first to admit this. "Great and disastrous," say they, "was the influence which this fatal day exercised upon the spirit of the French soldiers. These old warriors, always heretofore conquerors in the north of Europe, and often in Spain, no longer approached the English but with a secret feeling of distrust; while they on their part discovered, by the result of the battle of Albuera, the vulnerable side of their antagonists, and learned that, by resisting vigorously the first shock, and taking advantage of superiority of number, they would rarely fail to gain the victory."¹ The French were still true to the character given of them by the ancient historian: "Terrible in the first onset, they are easily withstood by patience, if that shock is not successful."* In truth, however, the British learned on this bloody field a simpler lesson, which they never afterwards forgot, and which they applied with fatal efficacy in all the subsequent battles of the war; viz. that the English *in line*, overlapping the enemy's flanks, could successfully resist and defeat the French *in column*,² and to the constant adherence to this

¹ Vict. et
Conq. xx.
249.

² Jom. iii.
506, 507.
Nap. iii. 557,
558.

* "Galli truces primo impetu, mox patientia et fortitudine repelluntur." CÆSAR.

maxim the unbroken career of success which followed is in a great measure to be ascribed.

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52.

Renewal of
the siege of
Badajoz.
May 27.

Delivered by the retreat of Soult from so formidable an antagonist, and deeply impressed with the necessity of straining every nerve to regain the important fortress of Badajoz, Wellington had no sooner arrived on the spot than he recommenced the siege with the utmost vigour. Both parties had improved to the uttermost the short breathing-time afforded them by the battle of Albuera; and never was activity more indispensable to either; for it was well known that succour was approaching, and that, unless the place could be carried in a fortnight, the united armies of Marmont and Soult would arrive from the north and south, and compel the raising of the siege. During the absence of the Allied forces, Philippon had levelled the trenches and destroyed the approaches of the besiegers, and not only repaired his own works where injured by the fire, but constructed strong interior intrenchments behind the points where breaches were expected, and considerably augmented his supplies of provisions. Colonel Dickson, who commanded the British engineers, had on his side, by extraordinary activity, got together a train of fifty pieces of heavy artillery; considerable supplies of stores had arrived, and six hundred gunners were at hand to man the pieces. All things being at length in readiness, the place was wholly invested on the 27th, and two days afterwards ground was broken against Fort Christoval. The operations of the besiegers were pushed with extraordinary vigour, as Wellington was well aware that the success of the enterprise entirely depended on celerity; and on the evening of the 6th June the breach was declared practicable. At midnight the storming party advanced to the attack. They reached the glacis in safety, and descended unobserved into the ditch. Upon arriving, however, at the foot of the breach, it was discovered that after dark the rubbish had been cleared away from the bottom of the slope, so that it could not be ascended; but the troops, boiling with courage, refused to retire, and remained making vain attempts to get in by escalade, till the severity of the fire and the stout resistance of the enemy obliged them to retreat.¹

May 27.

June 6.

¹ Wellington
to Lord
Liverpool,
June 12,
1811. Gurw.
viii. 12. Nap.
iv. 187, 190.
Jones, i. 391.
Vict. et Conq.
xx. 249.

Taught by this check the quality of the enemy with
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53.

Second as-
sault on
Christoval,
which is
repulsed.

June 9.

whom they had to deal, the British took more precautions in their next attempt. The fire continued with great vigour, both on Christoval and the body of the place, on the three following days, though, from the age and bad condition of the artillery, which had been drawn from Elvas, and of which a part was a hundred and fifty years old, a considerable proportion of the battering guns had become unserviceable. A heavy cannonade was also kept up on the castle; but although the breaching batteries played on it at the distance only of five hundred yards for seven days, from the 2d to the 9th June, yet so defective was the ordnance, that at the end of that time the breach was hardly practicable; and at any rate it could not be stormed while the enemy held Christoval, as the guns from the latter fort swept along the foot of the castle wall and over the ground in its front. Another attempt, therefore, was made to carry the latter fort; but though the storming party was stronger, and the ladders longer than before, a second defeat was experienced. The garrison, who on the former assault had been only seventy-five, were now increased to two hundred men; their spirit, much raised by their former success, was now elevated to such a pitch that they stood on their bastions inviting the British with loud cheers to come on: and the provident care of the governor of the fortress, Philippon, whose great talents in this species of warfare were now fully manifested, had not only given each soldier four loaded muskets, but arranged a formidable array of bombs, hand-grenades, and powder barrels on the top of the rampart, ready to be rolled over among the assailants the moment they reached the foot of the wall. Notwithstanding these obstacles, and the heroic valour of the garrison, who fought like lions in defence of their post, the assaulting columns united at the bottom of the breach: the scaling ladders were applied, and some brave men reached the summit, but they were immediately bayoneted by the garrison; and at the same time the bombs and powder barrels, being rolled over, exploded with such violence among the crowd of assailants that the order to retire was reluctantly given.¹ The heroic French then listened to the cries of the British wounded who had been left

¹ Vict. et
Conq. xx.
249, 250.
Jones, i. 291,
292. Wellington to Lord
Liverpool,
June 13,
1811. Gurw.
viii. 12, 13.
Nap. iv. 190,
192.

in the ditch, and desiring them to raise their scaling ladders, themselves helped them into the fort, where they were kindly treated—an admirable instance of generosity at such a moment, but by no means singular on either side in the contest of these truly brave nations throughout the whole Peninsular war.

Though the British army had lost four hundred men since they sat down the second time before Badajoz, and a few days more would unquestionably have put them in possession of that fortress, yet it had now become no longer possible to continue the siege. Napoleon, who fully concurred in Wellington's opinion as to the vast importance of this stronghold upon the issue of the campaign, had, early in May, sent positive orders to Marmont to collect his forces, and co-operate with Soult in the most vigorous manner for its deliverance; and for this object reinforcements had been poured into the armies on the Portuguese frontier from all parts of Spain. Soult received four thousand men from the army of the north, and as many from that of the south; Drouet, with eight thousand men from the ninth corps, which had been dissolved, was already in march to join him; Marmont was directed to collect his forces on the Tagus, and second the operations of Soult for the relief of Badajoz: Bessières was to occupy Valladolid with ten thousand men, and push an advanced guard to Salamanca, to observe the Ciudad Rodrigo frontier: while Bonnet was to evacuate the Asturias, and take a position on the Orbigo, towards Leon, to observe the loose Spanish array which was collected on the Galician frontier.¹

Nor was the anxiety of the Emperor confined merely to measures calculated to effect the deliverance of Badajóz. Defensive precautions on the most extensive scale were made, over the whole north of the Peninsula, as far back as Bayonne. Astorga was directed to be evacuated, and in part dismantled; strong works were erected around the castle of Burgos, the importance of which he even then clearly discerned; a *tête-du-pont* was constructed on the Ebro at Miranda, and another on the Bidassoa at Irun; the defiles between Vittoria and Bayonne were secured by blockhouses and fortified posts; a citadel of great strength was constructed at Santona, so as to render its peninsula

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54.
Measures of
Napoleon to
raise the
siege.

1 Vict. et.
Conq. xx.
253, 254.
Wellington
to Lord
Liverpool,
June 13,
1811. Belm.
i. 189, 190.

55.
His defensive
preparations
through the
whole of the
north of
Spain.

CHAP.
LXVI.

1811.

impregnable, and serve as a *point d'appui* to a force sent by sea from Bayonne to operate in the rear of an advancing army; a division under Vaendermaison crossed the Pyrenees, and was incorporated with the army of the north; four reserve brigades were collected at Bayonne under General Monthion, the battalions composing which were sent off into Spain as fast as they arrived, and replaced in that fortress by a fresh reserve division of six thousand men. In addition to this, a new corps of reserve was formed of the divisions of Reille, Caffarelli, Souham, and the Italian division of Severole, in all forty thousand strong, to which the important duty was committed of occupying Biscay, Navarre, and the north of Old Castile, and keeping open the great line of communication with Bayonne. By these means a very great addition was made to the strength of the French armies in Spain, which, by the end of September, were raised to the enormous amount of three hundred and sixty-eight thousand men, of whom three hundred and fourteen thousand were present with the eagles; a force so prodigious as apparently to render hopeless any attempt on the part of the English to dislodge them from the country. Nor were material preparations neglected for the equipment and support of the warlike multitude. Long convoys of ammunition and military stores of all kinds were incessantly traversing the Pyrenees. A million rations of biscuit were prepared in each of the towns of Bayonne, Burgos, and Valladolid; and though last, not least, as an indication of the sense of Napoleon of the pressing necessity of arresting the English, the maxim that war should maintain war was for a while suspended, and forty millions of francs (£1,600,000) were despatched from Paris to the headquarters of the different armies.¹

Although this general displacement and concentration of the French armies, in consequence of the offensive movement of Wellington, had the most important effects ultimately upon the war, and afforded the clearest indication of the importance which Napoleon attached to it, as well as the judgment with which the stroke had been directed; yet, in the first instance, it of necessity compelled the retreat of the English army, and the raising of

¹ Belm. i.
190, 191.
Napoleon to
Bessières.
June 8, 1811,
and Caffa-
relli, June 11,
1811. Mar-
mont to Na-
poleon, June,
21, 1811.
Belm. App. i.
No. 76, 78.

56.
Wellington
raises the
siege, and
retires into
Portugal.
June 10.

the siege of Badajoz. On the morning of the 10th, an intercepted letter from Soult to Marmont was brought to Wellington, which revealed to the English general the enemy's intention immediately to concentrate their whole force in Estremadura, and converge simultaneously to the banks of the Guadiana ; while, on the same day, intelligence arrived from the frontiers of Castile, that Marmont's corps were rapidly marching for the same destination, and would be at Merida by the 15th. The united strength of these armies, with the reinforcements they had received, would have amounted to above sixty thousand men, to whom the English general could not, from the sickness of the British army, and the extraordinary diminution of the Portuguese troops—from the fatigues of the winter campaign and the inefficiency of the local government—oppose more than forty-eight thousand. In addition to this, the Portuguese authorities had allowed the stores in Elvas to run so low, that enough did not remain in its magazines for a fortnight's defence of the place, far less to answer the demands for the siege of Badajoz. Supplies there were none in Lisbon ; and no means of transport existed to bring up the English ammunition from their great depot at Abrantes, as no representations on the part of Wellington could induce the regency at Lisbon to endanger their popularity, by taking any steps to draw forth the resources of the country for these necessary services. In these circumstances the raising of the siege had become indispensable ; and it took place, without molestation, on the 10th and 11th, the stores and heavy cannon being removed in safety to Elvas.¹

It was not long before the wisdom of this retreat became apparent : for Soult and Marmont soon appeared in most formidable strength on the banks of the Guadiana. The former of these marshals having received a part of the reinforcements destined for him, particularly those under Drouet, was strong enough to raise the siege himself, and for that purpose he broke up on the 11th from Llerena, and advanced towards Albuera, whither also Wellington repaired with the bulk of his forces, still maintaining the blockade of Badajoz, in hopes that the garrison, who were known to be in great want of provisions, would be compelled to capitulate before Marmont

CHAP.
LXVI.

1811.

¹ Wellington
to Lord
Liverpool,
June 13,
1811. Gurw.
viii. 14, 15.
Jones, i. 393.
Vict. et Conq.
xx. 253, 254.

57.
Entry of
Marmont
and Soult
into Badajoz.

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1811.

June 17.

June 17.
1 Wellington
to Lord
Liverpool,
June 20,
1811. Gurw.
viii. 36, 37.
Marmont to
Berthier,
June 21,
1811, and
Soult to Ber-
thier, June
22, 1811.
Belm. i.
App. No. 78,
79.

arrived. The English general on this occasion did not fail to occupy the hill which had been so fiercely contested on the former occasion, and the line in other places was strengthened by field-works. Soult, however, who was aware how rapidly Marmont was approaching, was too wary to be drawn into a combat with equal forces; and he therefore kept off till the 17th, when the near approach of the army of Portugal made it indispensable for the whole allied army to raise the blockade, and retire behind the Guadiana. In effect, that marshal, who, when he set out on his march, had neither magazines nor a single horse or mule to convey his supplies, had, by the terrors of military execution, extorted the requisite provisions and means of transport out of the wretched inhabitants, who were reduced to despair; * and setting out from Alba de Tormes on the 3d June, he had advanced, by forced marches, through Ciudad Rodrigo and the Puerto de Banos to Truxillo, which he reached on the 14th. On the 17th his advanced guard was at Merida, while Soult approached to Albuera; and the British army having retired across the Guadiana, the junction of the French armies was effected on the day following, and they entered Badajoz in triumph on the 28th, at the moment when Philippon and his brave comrades, having exhausted all their means of subsistence, were preparing the means of breaking through the British lines and escaping.¹

58.
Wellington
takes post on
the Caya, and
offers battle.
June 25.

A signal opportunity was now presented to the French generals for striking a great blow at the English army. By collecting their forces from all quarters, stripping the Asturias, Leon, and the two Castiles of troops, and leaving only enough in Andalusia to maintain the garrisons, they had assembled a prodigious army in front of Badajoz. Marmont brought thirty-one thousand infantry and five thousand horse, and Soult twenty-five thousand infantry and three thousand admirable horse; in all fifty-six thousand infantry and eight thousand

* "L'armée du Marechal Marmont se trouvait sans magasins et sans un seul caisson ou cheval pour transporter les canons; tous les chevaux et les mulets du train des équipages militaires ayant péri en Portugal. Elle enleva dans le pays tous les bestiaux, tous les mulets, tous les ânes, toutes les voitures, et emporta tout le blé qu'elle put ramasser. La province se trouva complètement ruinée sur un rayon immense, et les habitants furent réduits au désespoir."—BELMAS, i. 192.

cavalry, with ninety pieces of cannon. To oppose this powerful array, Wellington, who had assembled his whole force from Beira, had only the British and Portuguese; the Spaniards who took part in the battle of Albuera having been detached under Blake to cross the Guadalquivir, and menace Seville. There were collected forty-two thousand infantry, however, and four thousand cavalry, with sixty-four pieces of cannon, round the standards of the British chief; and these were tried soldiers, who had all faced the enemy, and who had the confidence in each other which experience alone can give. Though the French superiority, especially in cavalry and artillery, was very considerable, and the plains in which the action would be fought, near the Guadiana, were eminently favourable to the action of those arms; yet Wellington justly conceived that, with nearly fifty thousand British and Portuguese soldiers, he need not fear to give battle. Selecting, therefore, a defensive position behind the Caya, he awaited the approach of the enemy, who crossed the Guadiana in great force, and approached to reconnoitre his position. Every thing announced a great and decisive struggle; and as the French had, with infinite labour and difficulty, concentrated their forces from all quarters, from the banks of the Guadalquivir to the mountains of Asturias, and the English had no reserves to fall back upon, it was undoubtedly for the interest of the former to have brought on the fight.¹

But at this perilous crisis it was seen of what avail the moral weight of an army is, and how completely it can compensate even the most considerable advantage, in point of numbers and equipment, in the array to which it is opposed. Though the British sabres and bayonets in the field did not exceed twenty-eight thousand, or scarcely half of the French army, (the remainder being Portuguese,) yet these were the soldiers of Talavera and Busaco: the glory of Albuera shone around the bayonets of the right wing, the remembrance of Fuentes d'Onore added strength to the left. Despite all the advantages of their situation, and they were many—for the works of Elvas were in such a dilapidated condition that they could not have stood a week's siege, and the garrison had

CHAP.
LXVL
1811.

¹ Wellington to Lord Liverpool, June 20, 1811. Gurw. viii. 37, 38. Nap. iv. 202. Belm. i. 193, 194. Vict. et Conq. xx. 253, 257.

59. Soult and Marmont decline fighting, and withdraw.

CHAP.
LXVI.

1811.

June 24.

¹ Wellington
to Lord
Liverpool,
June 27,
1811. *Gurw.*
viii. 57. *Vict.*
et Conq. xx.
258, 259.
Nap. iv. 201.

only ten thousand round-shot left—the French marshals recoiled before the danger of hazarding the fate of the Peninsula on a pitched battle with such an army; and after reoccupying Olivenza, which was abandoned on their approach, and reconnoitring the British position, they withdrew without fighting. Nothing occurred except a sharp cavalry action near Elvas, in which six hundred British dragoons, at first successful, were at last drawn into an ambuscade by a feigned retreat of the French hussars, and defeated with the loss of a hundred and fifty men. After remaining a few days together, the noble array of the French separated, Soult retiring by the way of Albuera towards Seville, and Marmont defiling towards Truxillo and the valley of the Tagus near Talavera.¹

60
Operations of
Blake and
Ballasteros
in Andalusia.

June 30.

Wellington's principal reliance for the means of breaking up this great combined force, which threatened such dangers to Portugal in his front, was on Blake's troops, who, having separated from the British when they crossed the Guadiana on the 17th, had taken the road for Seville, now entirely denuded of defenders by the concentration of Soult's forces for the relief of Badajoz. Although the Spanish general did create a diversion on this favourable occasion in the French rear, yet he effected nothing compared to what, with more judgment and energy, might have been achieved. Having recrossed the Guadiana at Mertola on the 22d, he reached Castillegos on the 24th, where he remained inactive till the 30th, as if with the express design of giving the enemy time to prepare for his approach. He then moved forward; but instead of directing the bulk of his forces on Seville, of which he might have easily made himself master, and ruined the famous foundry there, from which the French were making all their ordnance for the siege of Cadiz, he turned to the right, and wasted three days in a fruitless siege of La Niebla, a walled town and castle in the mountains garrisoned by three hundred men. Villemur and Ballasteros, meanwhile, with a small body approached within cannon-shot of Seville, where the utmost alarm prevailed among the French depots, who took refuge, with the governor-general Daricau, in the fortified convent of La Cartusa; but Soult was by this time rapidly approaching, and the time for striking the blow had gone by. After

blowing up the fortifications of Olivenza, he broke up from Badajoz on the 27th June, relieved with one of his divisions the castle of Niebla early in July, despatched another with the utmost haste to secure Seville from assault, and himself crossing the Sierra Morena by Monasterio, re-entered the Andalusian capital on the 7th. Blake, upon the approach of the French, retired precipitately from La Niebla into Portugal, and thence descended to Ayamonte, at the mouth of the Guadiana, where he fortunately met with an English frigate and three hundred transports, which conveyed his infantry and cannon to Cadiz. Ballasteros, who with the cavalry covered the embarkation, afterwards took refuge in the adjoining island of Canelas, where he threw up intrenchments, and there he remained till August, when he embarked at Villa Real, and sailed with his infantry to the mountains of Ronda, while his cavalry remounted the Guadiana, and joined Castanos, who with a small force still kept his ground in the mountains of Estremadura.^{1*}

CHAP.
LXVI.

1811.

July 4.

July 7.

¹ Nap. iv.
209, 211.
Tor. iv. 77,
81. Vict. et
Conq. xx.
259, 265.

While these momentous operations were going forward on the Guadiana, a feeble attempt at renewed vigour had taken place in Grenada and on the Murcian frontiers. The mountaineers of Ronda, who had never been entirely subdued, were encouraged, by the departure of the whole disposable forces in Andalusia for the banks of the Guadiana, to make an attempt against the town of Ronda, the capital of their district; and four thousand armed peasants, under the Marquis Las Cucoas, had already reduced the French garrison there, eight hundred strong, to the last extremity. Soult immediately collected four columns from Seville, Cadiz, Malaga, and Grenada, with which he speedily raised the siege, and compelled the Spaniards to take refuge in their inaccessible cliffs, with the loss of some hundred men. Indefatigable in his activity, the French marshal next proceeded against the numerous but desultory array of the Murcians, who, to the number of

61.
Total rout of
the Spaniards
at Baza in
Grenada.

July 5.

* A curious incident, attended with most disastrous consequences, took place in Estremadura at this period. As some of the Portuguese troops were firing a *feu-de-joie* in a corn-field in the neighbourhood of Badajoz, in dry and sultry weather, the corn took fire, and the conflagration spread with such extraordinary rapidity and violence, advancing, as it always does, towards the north-east wind, which was blowing with gentle gales, that in three days it had reached Merida, a distance of above thirty miles, which was only saved from total destruction by the ample stream of the Guadiana, which stopped the flames. — See TORENO, iv. 75.

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LXVI.

1811.

July 8.

twenty-four thousand men, had advanced against Grenada during his absence on the north of the Sierra Morena. The Spaniards made hardly any resistance. No sooner did the advanced guard of Soult make its appearance than the whole array, which was strongly posted at Venta de Bahal in front of Baza, with a strong ravine protecting their front, took to flight and dispersed; and nothing but the unnecessary circumspection of Godinot, who was destined to cut off their retreat, saved them from total ruin. So complete, however, was their rout, that when Blake, who had been despatched from Cadiz with his troops to take the command of this numerous army, arrived, it had entirely vanished, and no force whatever remained in the field. The fugitives in great part took refuge in the city of Murcia; its intrenchments were strong; the yellow fever was raging in Carthage at no great distance; and the French troops were so dreadfully worn out by the long marches and excessive fatigues of the campaign, that Soult refrained from undertaking the siege, and gave his wearied soldiers their long-wished-for rest amidst the smiling villages of Andalusia.¹

Aug. 4.
¹ Vict. et
Cong. xx.
264, 267.
Nap. iv. 211,
212. Tor. iv.
200, 207.

62.
Rise and
rapid progress
of the insur-
rection in the
northern pro-
vinces.

Consequences far more important followed on the other extremity of this vast line of operations. The evacuation of the Asturias by Bonnet, the concentration of the French forces in Old Castile, and the commencement of defensive preparations at Burgos, on the Ebro, and even on the Bidassoa, in pursuance of the provident commands of Napoleon, which have been already mentioned,* produced an extraordinary excitement in the northern provinces. The inhabitants of these mountain regions—brave, hardy, and independent, in whom centuries of freedom had created elevation of character, and Alpine air nourished physical resolution—were universally roused by these apparently decisive indications of returning success, and with joyful steps repaired to the headquarters of the indefatigable chiefs who still, in their rocky fastnesses, maintained the standard of independence. The intelligence of the retreat of the French from Portugal, and the battles of Fuentes d'Onore and Albuera, coupled with the defensive preparations made on so extensive a scale in all Biscay and Old Castile, induced a

* *Ante*, Chap. lxvi. § 55.

general belief on the frontier that the French were about to retire altogether from the Peninsula, and that a vigorous insurrection in the northern provinces would cut off their means of retreat, and effect at a stroke the entire deliverance of the Peninsula. Upon a brave people, impressed with these feelings and expectations, Mina from Navarre, Mendizabel, who had disembarked in Biscay from Asturias, and Duran and the Empecinado in the northern parts of Old Castile, found no difficulty in making a very great impression. The insurrection spread like wild-fire through all the hill-country. Every glen, every valley, poured forth its little horde of men; the patriot bands increased in all the principal towns; and, contrary to what had heretofore been observed, were filled with young men of the first families in the country.¹

¹ Count Belliard to Berthier, June 3, 1811. Belm. i. App. No. 72, and i. 204.

Mendizabel, who had landed in Biscay early in June, soon found himself at the head of twelve thousand men, and from Potes, his headquarters, extended his incursions to Burgos and Vittoria; Mina was the chief of an equal force in Navarre, and sweeping the country to the very gates of Saragossa, answered the atrocious proclamations, already noticed, of Bessières* by a counter one, breathing the indignant spirit of retaliation and defiance;† while the Empecinado and Duran in Old Castile had become so formidable that they laid siege to, and captured the important fortified town of Calatayud, though defended by five hundred men. So urgent did affairs become in the northern provinces, and so uneasy was Napoleon at the insecurity of his communications in that quarter, that the imperial guard, which had entered Spain, were halted at Vittoria, and despatched to the right and left against the insurgents; succour was drawn both from the army of Portugal and that of the centre; and the large reinforcements pouring through the Pyrenees into the Peninsula were in great part absorbed in this harassing and murderous warfare. Mina's bands were defeated on two occasions with considerable loss by these formidable antagonists, but their success availed little to the victors. The defeated corps, as in the days of Sertorius, dispersed, having previously fixed on some distant and inaccessible point of rendezvous.² The French retired from the

63.
Operations of the insurgents in these provinces.

June 5.

June 9.
June 14.
² Belm. i. 204, 205. Vict. et Conq. x. 284, 285. Bessières to Berthier, June 6, 1811. Belm. i. Appendix, No. 73.

* *Ante*, Chap. lxvi. § 18.

† *Ante*, Chap. lxvi. § 19.

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LXVI.

1811.

64.
Napoleon's
new disposi-
tions in Spain.
July 9.

country, thinking that the insurrection was subdued; and they were apprised of their mistake by learning that their enemy had reappeared in undiminished strength in some other quarter, or cut off some post of consequence at a great distance from the scene of action.*

These threatening appearances in the north soon produced the most vigorous measures on the part of the French Emperor to secure this, which, from the commencement of the war, he had always considered as the vital point of the Peninsula. The Imperial Guard, under Dorsenne, at Burgos, who soon after replaced Bessières in the command of the army of the north, was augmented to seventeen thousand men; thirteen thousand were collected at Benevente to observe the Galicians under Santocildes, who were beginning to assume a threatening position at the mouths of their glens on that frontier; and nearly forty thousand fresh troops, chiefly old soldiers, crossed the Bidassoa and entered Spain. The great amount of these reinforcements, joined to the narrow escape which Badajoz had just made from falling into the hands of the British, induced Napoleon to make a material change in the distribution of his troops and the duties of his commanders. Marmont—withdrawn from the plains of Leon, which his troops had rendered a perfect desert, and the protection of Ciudad Rodrigo, which was confided to Dorsenne and the army of the north—was directed to take up his cantonments in the rich and comparatively unexhausted valley of the Tagus, from whence, without neglecting that fortress, he was to consider himself principally intrusted with the defence of Badajoz. For this purpose he was to station two divisions at Truxillo, ready to succour whichever place might be first threatened; to

* "The army of the north is composed of forty-four thousand men, it is true, but if you draw together twenty thousand, the communications are instantly lost, and the insurrection makes the greatest progress. The sea-coasts will soon be lost as far as Bilbao. We are in want of every thing: in fact, it is with the utmost difficulty that we can get subsistence from day to day. The spirit of the country is frightful. The journey of the King to Paris, the retreat of the army from Portugal, its march to the Tagus, and the evacuation of the whole country, not even excluding Salamanca, have turned the heads of the people to a degree which I cannot express. The insurgents recruit and swell in all quarters with extraordinary activity. If I am obliged to adopt a decided line, you must not reckon on the communications. Vittoria, Burgos, and Valladolid are the only points which I can hold."—BESSIÈRES to BERTHIER, *Valladolid*, 6th June 1811, No. 73; BELMAS, I. 560. See also BELLIARD to BERTHIER, *Madrid*, 3d June 1811; *Ibid.* I. 358.

construct a double fortified *tête-du-pont* at Almaraz, so as to secure that valuable passage of the Tagus; and to fortify the Puerto de Banos, so as to be master of that important pass through the mountains. For the support of his troops the whole province of Toledo was assigned to that marshal, who immediately began forming magazines from it at Talavera, to the infinite mortification of Joseph, who thus saw his principal granary and means of subsistence entirely diverted from his capital and court. Soult was enjoined to hold himself in readiness to advance with thirty thousand men to raise the siege of Badajoz, if it should be again threatened by an English army; while Dorsenne, with the army of the north, now augmented to sixty thousand admirable troops, was intrusted with the onerous and irreconcilable duties of at once guarding the northern passes against the insurgents of Navarre and Biscay, and protecting Ciudad Rodrigo from the enterprises of the British general.¹

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1811.

¹ Napoleon to Marmont, July 10, 1811. Belm. i. No. 80, Appendix, and i. 194, 195.

While Marmont was carrying these fresh instructions into execution, which he immediately did, and busily engaged in constructing at Almaraz the double forts at each end of the bridge, which were to secure the passage of the Tagus, Wellington, who constantly had an eye on the frontier fortresses, and felt that the recovery of one or both of them was essential to the making any durable impression on the Spanish territory, made a corresponding movement to the frontiers of Beira with the bulk of his forces. Leaving Hill with ten thousand infantry, fifteen hundred horse, and four brigades of artillery, on the Estremadura frontier, at Portalegre and Villa Viciosa, he himself moved, with the remainder of his forces, about forty thousand strong, to the north of the Tagus, and marching leisurely by Castelbranco, arrived on the Coa, opposite Ciudad Rodrigo, on the 8th August.²

^{65.} Wellington's movements to the north of Portugal.

July 21.
Aug. 8.
² Nap. iv. 224. Belm. i. 196.

The French general imagined that this movement was intended to co-operate with an advance which had recently taken place on the part of the Galicians under Santocildes, who had descended from their mountains into the plains of Leon, and reoccupied Astorga, when the general concentration of the imperial forces for the relief of Badajoz left the northern provinces comparatively destitute of French troops. To defeat this supposed com-

^{66.} Defeat of the Galicians on the Esala. July 9.

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1811.

bination, Dorsenne resolved in the first instance to drive back the Spaniards, who were threatening his right flank ; and this proved a task of no difficulty. The Galicians, destitute of every thing, and almost starving, had dwindled away to thirteen thousand ill-disciplined men, who were stationed behind the Esla, and at Foncebudon. Attacked in the end of August by Dorsenne with greatly superior forces, the Spaniards, after some sharp skirmishes, in which they were roughly handled by the French dragoons, were cut off from the magazines at Villa Franca and Lugo, and forced back into the mountains round the Val des Orras, on the Portuguese frontier. The alarm was excessive in Galicia ; and nothing saved the whole province from falling into the hands of the invaders but the advance of Wellington to the neighbourhood of Ciudad Rodrigo, which instantly checked the progress of the victorious French on the road to Lugo, and compelled Dorsenne, who had reoccupied Astorga, in which he now left an adequate garrison, to call in his detachments from all quarters to provide for the defence of that important fortress. In his retreat from Villa Franca to Astorga, the French general entirely devastated a line of country above twenty leagues in length : a barbarous measure, and as impolitic as it was cruel, as, by the admission of their own historians, it destroyed a part of the resources of their principal army.¹

¹ Tor. iv.
245, 249.
Nap. iv. 224,
226. Belm. i.
196, 197.
Vict. et Conq.
xx. 287, 289.

67.
Wellington's
measures for
the siege of
Ciudad
Rodrigo.

Though the march of the British from the banks of the Guadiana to those of the Coa was attended with this important collateral effect in rescuing Galicia, with its valuable harbours and naval establishments, from the grasp of the enemy, yet it was not the real object which Wellington had in view. Ostensibly undertaken to remove his troops from the sands of the Guadiana, so well known in the autumnal months to be fraught with death, to a more healthy region, he hoped to realise from it not only increased healthiness to his ranks, but additional security to the realm intrusted to his defence. It was on Ciudad Rodrigo that his heart was fixed ; and the dispersed situation of the French armies charged with its defence, joined to the defective state of the supplies with which the garrison was furnished, inspired him with a well-grounded hope, that, by a sudden attack, it might be

wrested from their hands. With this view he had, with all imaginable secrecy, prepared a powerful battering train of iron guns at Lisbon, which, with a reinforcement of British artillerymen, recently arrived from England, were ostentatiously embarked at that harbour as if for Cadiz ; but at sea they were shifted on board small craft, which brought them first to Oporto and then to Lamego, a hundred miles from the sea-coast, near the Douro, which being one of the great depots of the army, the arrival of the carts containing them excited little attention. The operation, however, of bringing sixty-eight heavy guns, with all their stores complete, up sixty miles of water-carriage, and then across nearly forty more of rough mountain roads, was one of no ordinary magnitude ; five thousand bullocks and a thousand militia were employed in transporting the train, and repairing the roads for several weeks together ; and nothing but the universal and indelible hatred which the cruelty and exactions of the French in that part of Spain had excited, could have prevented the transport of this great armament from coming to their knowledge. As it was, they remained entirely ignorant of what was going forward ; the guns, by vast exertions, arrived safe at the place of their destination ; and Wellington had the satisfaction of thinking that, unknown to the enemy, he had secured a powerful battering train within little more than sixty miles of Ciudad Rodrigo.¹

The enterprise thus undertaken by Wellington was equally bold in conception, and cautiously provided for as regarded execution. The battering train was brought forward, still unknown to the enemy, to Villa de Ponte, only sixteen leagues in rear of the army ; Don Julian Sanchez, with his guerillas, had for some time past established a blockade of the fortress ; while the Allied army remained in healthy cantonments on the high grounds around Fuente Guinaldo, almost within sight of its walls, ready at a moment's notice either to commence a siege, or move forward to protect the blockade. The fortress, it was known, had only provisions for six weeks ; and though the French armies of Dorsenne, Marmont, and Soult could, by concentrating, bring ninety thousand men, or nearly double his own force, to its relief, yet the hopes of

CHAP.
LXVI.
1811.

¹ Wellington to Lord Liverpool, July 18, 1811. Gurw. viii. 111. Nap. iv. 222, 224. Jones, ii. 28, 31.

68.
Grounds of hope for a successful enterprise against that fortress.

CHAP.
LXVI.

1811.

Wellington were founded upon the experienced impossibility of such a force being able, from want of provisions, to keep any time together; and though they might relieve it at a particular moment, he trusted that the hour would ere long arrive when he might strike a successful blow during the time that they were still at a distance. The army was now greatly improved in health, in the highest spirits, and in admirable order: the reinforcements recently arrived from England had raised its numerical amount to forty-eight thousand infantry, five thousand cavalry, and seventy-two guns, besides the battering train. Of this array, about forty-five thousand were under Wellington's own command: while the water-carriage in their rear enabled them constantly to keep together; and their central position went far, in the long run, to counterbalance the great superiority of force which, by concentrating all their armies, the enemy might bring to bear against him.¹

¹ Wellington to Lord Liverpool, July 18, 1811. Gurw. viii. 111, 112. Jones, ii. 29, 30. Nap. iv. 219, 221.

69.
Project of Napoleon for invading the Alentejo by Soult and Marmont.

This concentration of the Allied force in a position which constantly menaced Ciudad Rodrigo, was attended with this further and most important advantage, that it entirely disconcerted a deep project which Napoleon had conceived at this period, and which Soult had warmly espoused, and was preparing in the south the means of carrying into execution—viz., of invading Portugal with the combined armies of Marmont and the south, and transferring the seat of war into the Alentejo. This design—which was unquestionably the true mode of attacking Portugal, as it led by the shortest road to Lisbon, and took the famous defences of Torres Vedras in rear—is to be found fully developed in a despatch by the French Emperor to Marmont, of date 18th September 1811. That marshal's force, which was estimated as likely then to amount to forty-one thousand men, was to be joined by several divisions of Soult's forces, of whom twenty thousand were still in Estremadura; and with the united force, above sixty-five thousand men, he was to besiege Elvas, and inundate the Alentejo. If Wellington, as a set-off against this irruption, moved against Salamanca and the army of the north, Dorsenne was to fall back to Valladolid, or even Burgos, where fifty thousand men would be assembled to stop his progress; if, as

was deemed more probable, the English drew towards Lisbon, and descended the valley of the Tagus, Dorsenne was to follow them with twenty-five thousand men; and in either case Elvas, it was expected, would fall, and the French armies be placed in cantonments in the Alentejo about the same time that Suchet made himself master of Valencia. This well-conceived design, which perfectly coincided with what Soult had long been contemplating, was entirely based on the supposition that "the English had no heavy artillery for the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo; for if that enterprise is once undertaken, you must march at once to its relief;"—a striking proof of the important effects consequent on the admirable stratagem by which the English general had already secured that vital arm within a few days' march of the menaced fortress.¹

CHAP.
LXVI.
1811.

¹ Napoleon to Marmont, Sept. 18. 1811. Belm. i. App. No. 82.

Wellington, in the first instance, intended to have besieged Ciudad Rodrigo, as he conceived himself sufficiently strong to undertake that enterprise in the face of Marmont, and the succour of ten thousand men, which could alone, he conceived, be detached from the army of the north to its relief. Under this impression the preparations for the attack went on with great activity. He had not been many days, however, engaged in this undertaking, when he learned that nearly five-and-twenty thousand admirable troops were disposable around Dorsenne's standards. Upon this he changed his plan for the time to a blockade, and advanced his cavalry so as to straiten the fortress; while Almeida, in the rear, was put into a respectable posture of defence, in order to form a secure place of deposit for the battering train, still at Villa de Ponte, in case of disaster. No sooner did the French generals receive intelligence of the danger with which the fortress was threatened, than they assembled their forces, and collected supplies for its relief. Dorsenne, with infinite difficulty, and by the most rigorous exactions, got together nine hundred waggons laden with provisions for that purpose; and bringing down the divisions Vaendermaison and Souham from Navarre, put himself at the head of above thirty thousand soldiers to cover their entry. Marmont, at the same time, who had been strongly reinforced, and had now fifty thousand effective men around his eagles, in the valley of the

70.
Wellington turns the siege into a blockade, and the French approach to raise the siege.

CHAP.
LXVI.

1811.

¹ Wellington
to Lord
Liverpool,
Sept. 29.
1811. Nap.
iv. 229, 237,
Belm. i. 197.

Tagus, also collected a large convoy at Bejar, and advanced with a like body to form a junction with the army of the north. Their united forces, above sixty thousand strong, of whom six thousand were cavalry, with a hundred pieces of cannon, united at Tames, on the 21st September, and immediately advanced towards Ciudad Rodrigo, where Wellington, expecting their approach, had assembled all the forces, forty-five thousand strong, under his immediate command, to watch, and if possible prevent, their entrance.¹

71.
Approach of
the two
armies to
Ciudad
Rodrigo,
which is
revictualled.

Every man in both armies conceived that the decisive moment had now arrived, and that a pitched battle between these gallant antagonist hosts was now to determine the fate of the Peninsula. But the crisis passed over without any momentous occurrence: the hour of Spain's deliverance had not yet struck. Wellington was too sagacious to trust to doubtful hazard what he felt confident he would ere long accomplish by skill. Though with the noble army at his command he had no reason to dread a battle, even against the superior forces of the French marshal; yet there were many reasons which rendered it inexpedient at this time to incur the hazard an engagement on such a scale would necessarily occasion, even with the best troops. The position which he held in presence of Rodrigo was extensive, and therefore weak: the height of El Bodon in its centre, which was in front of the whole, was indeed strong, and Fuente Guinaldo had been improved by field-works; but the wings, which occupied a great extent of country, were in the plain, where the enemy's great superiority in cavalry gave him a decided advantage; and the position, with the right wing alone across the Agueda, and the centre and left behind that stream, was dangerous from the high banks which lined the sides of the river, and the sudden floods to which in autumn it was subject. The English general, too, was well aware that want of provisions must soon

² Wellington
to Lord
Liverpool,
Sept. 29,
1811. Gurw.
viii. 300, 301.
Nap. iv. 236,
238.

compel the vast array in his front to separate and return to their distant cantonments, and then he meditated a sudden attack with the heavy artillery, which, without their being aware of it, he had at hand. Still Wellington resolved to fight, if he could do so on terms at all approaching to equality;² and for this purpose, without

attempting to prevent the passage of the convoys, which entered on the 24th, he kept his troops on their ground, though with some hazard to the right wing, advanced beyond the river in order to compel the enemy to concentrate and show all his force, to protect the operation of throwing in the supplies.

CHAP.
LXVI.

1811.
Sept. 24.

When the French army approached the British, it was at first uncertain on which point they would direct their attack ; but after some hesitation, Montbrun, with fourteen battalions of foot and thirty-five squadrons of splendid horsemen, crossed the Agueda by the bridge of Rodrigo and adjacent fords, and, pouring rapidly along the road, soon reached the heights of EL BODON. The British, at this point of their position, were not prepared for so sudden an onset ; and while Wellington sent to Guinaldo for a brigade of the 4th division, Major-general Colville, the officer in command, was directed to draw up his little force, consisting of the 5th and 77th British regiments, and the 21st Portuguese, with eight Portuguese guns and five squadrons of Alten's German dragoons, on the summit of the height, which presented a convex front towards the enemy, and was secured on either flank by deep and rugged ravines. Though Picton, with the 4th division, made all imaginable haste to reach the scene of danger, the crisis had passed before he got up. On came Montbrun's cuirassiers like a whirlwind, in spite of the severe cannonade, which tore their masses in a fearful manner, and, dividing into two bodies when they reached the front of the hill, rode up the rugged sides of the ravines with the utmost fury. Arrived there, they were only checked by the steady fire of the guns and devoted intrepidity of the German horsemen at the summit, who for three hours charged the heads of the squadrons as they ascended, and hurled them not less than twenty times, men and horses rolling over each other, back into the hollows. Montbrun, however, was resolute ; his cavalry were numerous and daring ; and by repeated charges and extreme gallantry they at length got a footing on the top, and captured two of the guns, cutting down the brave Portuguese at their pieces. But the 5th regiment instantly rushed forward, *though in line*, into the midst of the cavalry, and retook the guns, which quickly renewed their fire ;¹ and at the same time

72.
Combat of
El Bodon.
Sept. 24.

¹ Wellington to Lord Liverpool, Sept. 29, 1811. Gurw. viii. 301, 302. Nap. iv. 239, 240. Vict. et Conq. xx. 273. Lond. ii. 211. Beamish Germ. Leg. ii. 15.

CHAP.

LXVI.

1811.

the 77th and 21st Portuguese forced the horsemen down the steep on the other side. But though this phalanx of heroes thus made good their post, the advance of the enemy in the end rendered it no longer tenable. A French division was rapidly approaching the only road by which they could rejoin the remainder of the centre at Fuente Guinaldo; and, despite all the peril of the movement, Wellington ordered them to descend the hill and cross the plain, six miles broad, to Fuente Guinaldo.

73.
Heroic
steadiness of
Colville's
brigade.

If the observation of Plutarch be just, that it is not those actions which lead to the greatest results, so much as those in which the greatest heroism or magnanimity is displayed, which are the most important subjects of history, never was a combat more deserving of remembrance than this extraordinary action. Descending from his rugged post into the plain, the dauntless Colville formed his infantry into two squares; and the German dragoons, altogether unable to withstand the enormous mass of the French cavalry in the open plain, being obliged to take shelter behind the Portuguese regiment which was first in retreat, the foot soldiers in the rear, consisting of the 5th and 77th, denuded on all sides, were instantly enveloped by a whirlwind of horse. The thundering squadrons, with their scabbards clattering against each other, rending the air with their cries, shaking the ground beneath their feet, charged with apparently resistless force on three sides of the steady square. But vain, even in the bravest hands, is in general the sabre against the bayonet, if equally firmly held. A rolling volley was heard, spreading out like a fan around the mass; the steeds recoiled as from the edge of a glowing crater; in an instant the horsemen, scorched, reeling, and dismayed, were scattered on all sides as by the explosion of a volcano; "the glitter of bayonets was seen on the edge of the smoke; and the British regiments, unscathed, came forth like the holy men from the Assyrian furnace."¹*

¹ Nap. iv.
239, 240.
Lond. ii. 213,
214. Beam-
ish, ii. 16.
Wellington
to Lord
Liverpool,
Sept. 29,
1811. Gurw.
viii. 302.

74.
Their admi-
rable retreat
when sur-
rounded by
the enemy's
horse.

Before the French could recover from this bloody repulse, Picton, who had used the utmost diligence to reach his comrades, joined the retreating squares; and the whole, uniting together, retreated in admirable order for six miles over the arid plain, till they reached the

* NAPIER, iv. 240, has the chief merit of this glowing description.

position of Fuente Guinaldo, assigned for the general rendezvous in the rear. During this march was exhibited, in the most striking manner, the extraordinary steadiness which discipline and experience had given to each of the rival bodies. The British moved in close order with their flanks to the enemy, who in great strength rode on each side, within pistol-shot. With eager glance the officers and men of both armies, during this long and anxious march, eyed each other, watching for any incident or momentary confusion which might afford an opportunity for an attack. But none such occurred; and the British reached their destination without being again charged or molested, save by the firing of six pieces of horse artillery which hung on the rear of their column, and poured in an incessant fire of round shot, grape, and canister.* Wellington now gave orders for concentrating his troops around Fuente Guinaldo. The light division was directed to retire across the Agueda and join the line, and the left, under Graham, to come up from the Azava; but Craufurd, who commanded the former, eager for fighting, only came a few miles nearer, and was still sixteen miles off. Graham was twelve; and at nightfall only fifteen thousand men were collected in front of the French army, when a general battle was confidently expected by both parties.¹

Marmont had now gained a great advantage over the English general; but he was ignorant of the incalculable prize which was almost within his grasp. On the morning of the 26th he had collected his whole army, sixty thousand strong, with one hundred and twenty guns,

CHAP.
LXVI.
1811.

¹ Nap. iv.
241, 242.
Lond. ii. 214,
215. Wel-
lington to
Lord
Liverpool,
Sept. 29,
1811. Gurw.
viii. 302.

* "Picton, during this retreat, conducted himself with his accustomed coolness. He remained on the left flank of the column, and repeatedly cautioned the different battalions to mind the quarter-distance and the telling-off. 'Your safety,' said he, 'my credit, and the honour of the army, are at stake. All rests with you at this moment.' We had reached to within a mile of the entrenched camp, when Montbrun, impatient lest we should escape from his grasp, ordered his troopers to bring up their left shoulders, and incline towards our columns. The movement was not exactly bringing his squadron into line; but it was the next thing to it, and at this time they were within *half pistol-shot of us*. Picton took off his hat, and holding it over his eyes as a shade from the sun, looked sternly but anxiously at the French. The clatter of the horses and the clanking of the scabbards was so great when the right half squadron moved up, that many thought it was the forerunner of a general charge, and some of the mounted officers called out, 'Had we not better form square?' 'No,' replied Picton; 'it is but a *ruse* to frighten us, but it *won't do*.' And so in effect it proved. Each battalion in its turn formed the rearguard to stop the advance of the enemy, and having given them a volley, they fell back at double quick time behind the battalion formed in their rear."—*Reminiscences of a Subaltern*, p. 182; and *Picton's Memoirs*, ii. 37, 39.

CHAP.
LXVI.

1811.

75.

Imminent
danger of the
British army
at Fuente
Guinaldo.

within cannon-shot of the British centre. Wellington's position was now most critical; for, as neither his right nor left wing had come up, he had not more than fifteen thousand men at his disposal to resist the overwhelming force of the enemy; and retreat he would not, for that would be to abandon Craufurd and the light division to destruction. He accordingly stood firm, and the troops anxiously gazed on the enemy, expecting a decisive battle. The array which Marmont drew forth was indeed splendid, and calculated to inspire the most elevated ideas of the power of the French empire. The enormous mass of cavalry, seven thousand strong, whose gallantry the Allies had felt on the preceding day, stood in compact array before them; next came different bodies of infantry and artillery, above twenty-five thousand in number who went through various evolutions with extraordinary precision: at noon twelve battalions of the Imperial Guard stood forth in close column, and by their martial air, admirable array, and bloody overhanging plumes, attracted universal attention. During the whole day, horse, foot, and cannon never ceased to pour into the French camp, and every thing was made ready for an attack the next day on the British position. But Shakespeare's remark, "there is a tide in the affairs of men," was never more strikingly exemplified than on this occasion. While Marmont, in the vain confidence of irresistible strength, was thus making a useless display of his forces, when Wellington, with three divisions only, lay before him, the precious hours, never to be recalled, passed away. Reinforcements came rapidly in to the English line; at three o'clock the light division arrived; and the object for which the position of Fuente Guinaldo had been held being now accomplished, a retreat was by the English general ordered in the night to a new position, much stronger, because narrower, than the former, in the rear, where the Allied army was now concentrated, between the Coa and the sources of the Agueda. The plumes of the Imperial Guard were not again seen by the British army till they waved over the fall of the empire on the field of Waterloo.^{1*}

¹ Nap. iv.
241; 243.
Lond. ii. 215,
217. Beam-
ish, ii. 18.
Gurw. viii.
302, 303.

* When Marmont next day was informed of the slender amount of force which lay before him at Fuente Guinaldo on the 26th, and that the light division had not come up, he exclaimed—"And, Wellington, thy star too is bright!"—NAPIER, iv. 248.

The British right wing retired by two roads on Alber-
 garia and Aldea del Ponte, while the left fell back to
 Bismula; and with such regularity was the retreat con-
 ducted that not only no sick or stragglers, but not even
 an article of baggage, was left behind. By a strange
 coincidence, but of which a more memorable instance
 occurred afterwards in the Moscow retreat, the French
 army at the same moment was also retiring; and for
 some hours these two gallant hosts were literally march-
 ing with their backs to each other! As soon as the
 British retreat was discovered, the French wheeled about
 and moved back in pursuit; but, before they could come
 up with the English army, the new ground was taken.
 A sharp action ensued at Aldea del Ponte, where a
 French column attacked a brigade of the 4th division, but
 was quickly repulsed; and the British, assuming the
 offensive, drove the enemy out of the village, which was
 held till the whole army had reached its destined ground,
 when the French again returned, and it was evacuated
 with some loss. On the 28th, Wellington retired a league
 farther, to a very strong and narrow position in front of
 the Coa, where he meant to give battle, even with all the
 risk of fighting with a river edged by rocky banks in his
 rear. As it was, however, neither the strength nor the
 danger of the position was put to the test. Marmont,
 who was already severely pinched for provisions, retired
 towards Ciudad Rodrigo the same day, and shortly after
 passed the Puerte de Banos, and resumed his old quarters
 on the banks of the Tagus, while Dorsenne retreated to
 Salamanca and the Douro; and Wellington put his troops
 into cantonments on both banks of the Coa, the blockade
 of Ciudad Rodrigo being resumed by Don Julian Sanchez
 and the British light cavalry.¹

CHAP.
LXVI.

1811.

76.

Both armies
go into can-
tonments.

Sept. 27.

Sept. 28.

¹ Gurw. viii.
 304, 305.
 Nap. iv. 243,
 245. Lond.
 ii. 217, 227.
 Vict. et
 Conq. xxi.
 19, 21.

In these brilliant actions the Allies sustained a loss of
 about three hundred men; that of the French was more
 than double this number, owing to the rapidity and
 precision of the fire of the infantry on their dense
 squadrons at El Bodon, and on the retreat to Guinaldo.
 The most heroic yet generous spirit animated both
 armies, of which an interesting instance occurred in one
 of the cavalry encounters. A French officer was in the
 act of striking at the brave Captain Felton Harvey of the

77.
 Courtesy
 shown on
 both sides
 during these
 operations.

CHAP.
LXVI.

1811.

14th dragoons, when, seeing he had only one arm, he quickly let his sword fall to a salute, and passed on. Major Gordon,* who had been sent by Wellington with a flag of truce to Marmont's headquarters, was hospitably received by the French marshal, with whom he frequently dined, and often accompanied on his rides round the outposts, on which occasions the prospects of the campaign and the qualities of the troops on both sides were freely discussed. On the other hand, General Regniaud, governor of Ciudad Rodrigo, having fallen soon after into an ambuscade laid by the indefatigable Don Julian Sanchez, and being made prisoner, he became a frequent guest at Wellington's table, where he occasioned no small entertainment by the numerous anecdotes he related of the French generals and armies. Such is war between brave nations, by whom all feelings of hostility are invariably laid aside, and glide into those of peculiar courtesy, the moment the individual ceases to act in the hostile ranks.¹

Oct. 15.
¹ Nap. iv.
225, 230;
and 252, 254.

78.
Reoccu-
pation of
Asturias by
Bonnet, and
concentration
of French
forces at
Valladolid
and Burgos.

The Allied army, which had been unhealthy during the whole campaign, became doubly so when the troops went into cantonments; and they had not been at rest a fortnight before the sick had augmented to above seventeen thousand—the usual effect of the sudden cessation of active operations on men whose bilious secretions had been greatly increased by the long continuance of fatigue in warm weather, and which, now no longer exhaling in perspiration, induced fevers. The French, however, were nearly as unhealthy; and the penury of subsistence on the Portuguese frontier rendered it absolutely impossible for their generals to undertake any operation of importance. Dorsenne, in the north, took advantage of this intermission of active operations on the Portuguese frontier to push Bonnet, with a strong division, into the Asturias, who without difficulty surmounted the passes of Cubillas and Ventana, which had been left unguarded by the enemy, and reoccupied Oviedo, Gihon, and all the principal posts in the country. This expedition, joined to the pressing necessity of subduing the insurrection in the northern provinces, and the dark clouds which were arising in the north, led, in December,² to a fresh disposi-

Nov. 1811.
² Gurw. viii.
384. Belm. i.
203, 204.
Berthier to
Joseph. Dec.
13, 1811.
Ibid. Appen-
dix, No. 84.
Lond. ii. 225,
226.

* Brother to the Earl of Aberdeen.

tion of the imperial forces. Marmont received orders to establish his headquarters at Valladolid; Dorsenne was to retire to Burgos, and strongly occupy Biscay and Navarre; while the Imperial Guard was transferred to Burgos, where it was to hold itself in readiness to march into France: a series of arrangements which already revealed the secret views of Napoleon for a Russian campaign.

CHAP.
LXVI.
1811.

This concluded the campaign of 1811, so far as the operations of the principal armies were concerned; but several important operations occurred with detached corps, which, like the red hue of the evening sky, already gave presage of the glorious dawn.

The first of these events was the surprise of Gerard's division at Aroyo de Molinos, on the 28th of October. When Wellington concentrated his army at Fuente Guinaldo to oppose Marmont and Dorsenne, Hill was left in the northern part of Estremadura, to watch Drouet, who remained opposite to him in that country. After a variety of marches and countermarches, which led to no result, both generals having orders not to fight unless an opportunity should occur of doing so to advantage, Hill received intelligence, on the 27th October, that Gerard, with three thousand infantry and cavalry belonging to Drouet's corps, lay at Aroyo de Molinos, in such a situation as to be liable, by a sudden cross march, to a surprise from the English troops. That able officer instantly made his dispositions; by a forced march he reached Alcuesca, four miles from where Gerard lay, before night-fall, and passed the early part of the night in bivouac, without permitting any light to be made, or the slightest sound to escape, which might lead the French patrols to suspect his vicinity. At two in the morning he broke up, and, advancing swiftly and silently, got close to the road by which he knew the enemy would march out on the following morning, yet concealed from their view by an intervening ridge. In that position he awaited the break of day, and as soon as the gray of the dawn appeared, his column divided into two parts; the right, under General Howard, moving by a wide circuit into the rear of the town by which the French were to retreat, the left, under General Stewart,¹ directly on the town from the

79.
Surprise of
Gerard at
Aroyo de
Molinos.
Oct. 28.

¹ Jones, ii.
39, 41. Nap.
iv. 321, 322,
Hill's Des-
patch, Oct.
30, 1811.
Gurw. viii.
372.

CHAP.
LXVI.

1811.

80.
Total defeat
of the
French.

Alcuesca road. The latter column was to attack first; and it was hoped that the enemy, dislodged by a sudden attack from the town, would be completely destroyed by falling into the hands of Howard's men on their line of retreat.

On this occasion the British felt the benefit of that unbounded confidence and attachment with which they had inspired the Spanish peasantry; for though the whole inhabitants of Alcuesca and its vicinity knew perfectly of the arrival and the object which they had in view, not a man betrayed the secret, and Stewart's columns were within gunshot of the enemy before the latter were aware of their approach. Favoured by a thick mist and deluge of rain, the troops entered Aroyo, with drums suddenly beating and loud cheers. The 71st and 92d regiments, both Highland, led the attack in the town; and they entered with the bagpipe at their head playing the celebrated Jacobite air, "Hey, Johnnie Cope, are you waking yet?" in allusion to the well-known incident of that commander, in the conflict with the Highlanders under the Pretender, at Prestonpans in 1745. So unexpected was the onset, that the cavalry pickets were overwhelmed before they had time to mount; and the infantry, who were under arms, beginning to muster, were so confounded that, after a desultory struggle, they fled precipitately out of the town, leaving a great many of their number prisoners. Once outside, however, they formed two squares and endeavoured to resist; but while a brisk firing was going on between their rear and Stewart's men pressing on in pursuit, Howard's column suddenly appeared directly in their rear on the great road to Truxillo, and no alternative remained but to surrender, or break and seek safety by climbing the steep and rugged sides of the Sierra on their flank. Gerard,* however, who was a gallant as well as a skilful officer, though surprised on this occasion, for some time made a brave resistance; but seeing his guns taken by the 15th dragoons, and his hussars dispersed with great slaughter by the 9th dragoons and German hussars, he became aware that his situation was desperate, and gave the word

* Since Marshal Gerard, minister-at-war to Louis Philippe, who besieged and took the citadel of Antwerp in 1832.

disperso. Instantly the squares broke, and all the men, throwing away their arms, ran with their utmost speed towards the most rugged and inaccessible parts of the Sierra. Swiftly as they fled, however, the British pursued as quickly; the Highlanders, at home among the rocks and scaurs, secured prisoners at every step; the 28th and 34th followed rapidly on the footsteps of the flying mass; the 39th turned them by the Truxillo road; and Gerard himself, after displaying the greatest intrepidity, only escaped by throwing himself into rugged cliffs, where the British, encumbered with their arms, could not follow him. He joined Drouet, by devious mountain paths, at Orellano on the 9th November, with only six hundred followers, without arms and in woful plight, the poor remains of three thousand superb troops who were around his eagles at Aroyo de Molinos, and who were esteemed the best brigade in Spain. General Bron and Prince D'Aremberg, with thirteen hundred prisoners, three guns, and the whole baggage of the enemy, fell into the hands of the victors.¹

CHAP.
LXVI.
1811.

¹ Hill's Desp.
Oct. 29, 1811.
Gurw. viii.
374, 375.
Jones, ii. 40,
41. Nap. iv.
322, 324.
Vict. et
Conq. xx.
275, 277.

This brilliant success, which was achieved with the loss of only seventy killed and wounded, diffused the highest satisfaction through the whole British army; and shortly after the health of the troops was materially improved, by a considerable portion of them being moved into better supplied and more comfortable quarters on the banks of the Mondego and the Douro. The sick daily diminished, the spirits of the men rose, and soon the hospitals were relieved of half their inmates. Meanwhile, Wellington took none of the rest to himself which he allowed to his troops. With unwearied industry he laboured incessantly at the improvement of the transport service, which was soon put on a much more efficient footing, and in the forwarding of stores and ammunition to the front, which clearly showed that Ciudad Rodrigo was ere long to be besieged. In spite of all his vigilance, however, the enemy contrived to throw more than one convoy into that fortress, and in the end the blockade was almost abandoned, from finding that the investing force was more straitened for provisions than the invested. Wellington, however, did not care for the introduction of these supplies, as all his efforts had long been directed to

81.
Improvement
in the health
of the British
army in their
cantonments.

Nov. 9.

CHAP.
LXVI.

1811.

¹ Jones, ii.
37, 39. Lond.
ii. 236, 240.

besieging the place in form ; for which purpose he had already prepared, with infinite pains and secrecy, a portable bridge, which was to be thrown, for the passage of the stores, over the Agueda ; and had rendered the Douro navigable for boats as far up as its junction with that river, forty miles higher than they had ever yet ascended. But ere the season for striking the meditated blow arrived, new and cheering advices had arrived from the south of Spain.¹

82.
French expedition against
Tarifa, which
fails. Oct. 14,
and Oct. 27.

Ballasteros, after his embarkation at Ayamonte, subsequent to the battle of Albuera, had landed in the south of Spain, where he had drawn several thousand recruits to his standard ; but being unable to withstand the powerful force which Soult directed against him, he had more than once taken refuge under the cannon of Gibraltar. Meanwhile the English government, desirous of alimentering the war thus energetically revived in the southern extremity of the Peninsula, despatched a body of two thousand men, of whom five hundred were British, who took possession of TARIFA, an ancient town situated on the most southerly extremity of Spain, nearer to the African coast than even the celebrated Pillars of Hercules, and surrounded by an old wall without wet ditch or outworks. Soult, who was well aware how narrowly the besieging force at Cadiz had escaped destruction from the combination which the Allies had brought to bear upon them at the time of the battle of Barrosa, resolved to dislodge them from this position ; and the fortifications were so extremely weak that hardly any resistance was expected. Godinot, accordingly, with eight thousand men, having driven Ballasteros under the cannon of Gibraltar, received orders to turn aside and besiege this stronghold. In the march thither, however, he was so raked in traversing the road, which ran along the sea-shore, by the broadsides of the English ships of war which hung on his flank, that, after sustaining a severe loss, he abandoned the enterprise in despair and returned to Seville ; where, unable to bear the warm reproaches of Soult, who was irritated at his repeated failures, he blew out his brains.²

² Vict. et
Cong. xx.
271, 272.
Tor. iv. 298.
Jones, ii. 42,
43. Nap. iv.
329, 330.

The French marshal was not to be diverted from his design, with the importance of which he was now fully impressed, by this failure ; and he now prepared an expe-

dition against Tarifa on a larger scale, and intrusted the command to a very distinguished officer, General Laval, who approached its walls at the head of seven thousand men in the middle of December, while two other divisions of three thousand each came up, one from Cadiz, the other from Ronda. This formidable accumulation of force compelled Ballasteros again to take shelter in the lines of Gibraltar, and obliged Skerret, who commanded the Allied force, to await the enemy's arrival within the walls, where he had eighteen hundred British, and seven hundred Spaniards. The English engineers, with great skill, had constructed interior retrenchments on the side most likely to be assailed, so as to render the assault of the wall the least difficulty which the enemy would have to encounter. The houses adjoining the point expected to be breached were loopholed, the streets barricaded, and an old tower, which commanded the whole town, was armed with heavy artillery, at once to send a storm of grape on the assailants, and secure, if necessary, the retreat of the garrison to their ships, which lay in the bay. These precautions, though judicious, were not however put to the test. Laval broke ground before the place on the 19th December; and so completely were the anticipations of the British engineers realised, that the guns opened their fire exactly on the spot where they were expected to do so, and behind which the preparations had been made. The approaches were pushed with great rapidity; the battering guns, which began firing on the 27th, soon brought the old wall down; and by the 30th the breach was sixty feet wide and of easy ascent. But the British regiments were on the ramparts, each at its proper post; the 47th and a Spanish battalion guarded the breach, the 84th and rifles were dispersed round the walls.¹

Little aware of the quality of the antagonists with whom they had to deal, a column of two thousand French commenced the assault at daylight on the 31st. Such, however, was the vigour of the fire kept up upon them from every part of the rampart where a musket or gun could be brought to bear on the mass, that it broke before reaching the wall, and the troops arrived at the foot of the breach in great disorder. Part tried to force their way up, part glided down the bed of a stream which

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83.

Second
expedition
against, and
siege of
Tarifa.

Dec. 19.

Dec. 27.

¹ Nap. iv.
330, 334.
Belm. iv. 17,
31. Jones, ii.
43, 44. Vict.
et Conq. xx.
279, 280.

84.
Defeat of the
assault, and
raising of the
siege.
Dec. 31.

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1811.

flowed through the town, and a few brave men reached the portcullis which debarred entrance above the waters. But the British soldiers now sent down such a crashing volley on the throng at the iron grate, and at the foot of the breach, that they dispersed to the right and left, seeking refuge under any projecting ground from the intolerable musketry. The combat continued for some time longer, the French, with their usual gallantry, keeping up a quick irregular discharge on the walls; but the ramparts streamed forth fire with such violence, and the old tower sent such a tempest of grape through their ranks, that, after sustaining a dreadful loss, they were forced to retreat, while a shout of victory, mingled with the sound of musical instruments, passed round the walls of the town. This bloody repulse suspended for some days the operations of the besiegers, who confined themselves to a cannonade; and meanwhile the rain fell in such torrents, and sickness made such ravages in their ranks, that, according to their own admission, "the total dissolution of their army was anticipated." Laval persevered some days longer against his own judgment, in obedience to the positive injunctions of Victor, and the breach was so wide from the continued fire that a fresh assault was expected; but on the 4th he raised the siege, and retreated in dreadful weather, having first drowned his powder and buried his heavy artillery. In this expedition, one of the most disastrous to their arms, on a small scale, which occurred in the whole Peninsular war, the French lost their whole cavalry and artillery horses, and about five hundred men by the sword, besides an equal number by sickness and starvation, while the total loss of the Allies did not exceed one hundred and fifty.¹

¹ Belm. iv. 33, 39. Nap. iv. 336, 338. Jones, ii. 44, 45. Viet. et Cong. xx. 280.

85.
General results of this campaign.

The campaign of 1811, less momentous in its issue than that which preceded it, when the great struggle of Torres Vedras was brought to a conclusion, and less brilliant in its results than the one which followed, when the decisive overthrow of Salamanca loosened the foundations of French power over the whole of Spain;—had yet a most important influence on the deliverance of the Peninsula. It is not at once that the transition is made from disaster to success. Victory is of as slow growth, if it is to be durable, to nations, as wealth or fame to individuals. To

turn the stream—to change the gales of fortune—to convert the torrent of disaster into the tide of conquest, is the real difficulty. To make the first hundred pounds often costs more to the poor aspirant after opulence than to make the next thousand. During the campaign of 1811, this first hundred was made. For the first time since the British standards appeared in Spain, something approaching an equality had been attained between the contending forces. The advantages of a central position, and of water carriage in his rear, had counterbalanced the still decided superiority of number; and Wellington, with his sixty thousand British and Portuguese soldiers, appeared on the offensive in the midst of a hundred and fifty thousand enemies.

True, he had hitherto been foiled in his efforts; true, the siege of Badajoz had been raised; that of Ciudad Rodrigo prevented; the blood of Albuera had, to all appearance, streamed in vain. But, to the discerning eye which looked beyond the surface of things, these very disappointments were fraught with future hope. The British army had, throughout, taken the initiative and preserved the offensive. By slight demonstrations they had put in motion the enemy's forces in every part of Spain. The war, throughout, had been maintained in his territories, and all insult to the Portuguese frontier averted. These enterprises had been rendered abortive only by accumulating against the English army the whole of the disposable force in the south-west and north of Spain. The tide of conquest had been arrested; the consolidation of the French power prevented in other quarters by these repeated concentrations; the desolation of the country precluded the possibility of such large masses continuing for any length of time together; and it was easy to see that, if circumstances should enable the British government to augment, or compel the French Emperor to diminish, their respective forces in the Peninsula, the scale would ere long turn to the other side. The balance in military as well as in political affairs generally quivers for a time before it inclines decisively to a new side.

But, what was still more important, this campaign was productive, to all concerned in the British army, of one

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86.
The British,
though often
foiled, had
gained much.

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1811.

87.
The British
government
and army
learned their
own defi-
ciencies in
this cam-
paign.

advantage of more ultimate value than any which they had hitherto gained—a sense of their own deficiencies. This invaluable acquisition, of such tardy growth to nations as well as to individuals, had been forced alike upon the army, the officers, and the government, by its events. The soldiers saw that mere valour, though it might win a field, could hardly decide a campaign; that the loud murmur at retreat, which forced on the carnage of Albuera, might be drowned in blood; and that the true soldier is he who, ready to fight to the last extremity when the occasion demands, is equally patient and docile in every other duty till that season has arrived. The officers learned that war is at once a difficult science and a practical art; that minute attention to details is indispensable to its perfection; and that the bluntness of intrenching tools, the failure of supplies, or ill-regulated sallies of valour in the field, may often mar the best concerted enterprises. The government felt the necessity of straining every nerve to aid their zealous general in the contest: reinforcements to a large amount arrived before the close of the campaign, though, unhappily, the uniform unhealthiness of the soldiers on first landing prevented their swelling, as might have been expected, the ranks of the army; and as much specie as could possibly be drawn together, though it was but little, was forwarded for its use.¹

¹ Lond. ii.
235, 236.
Gurw. viii.
222. Nap. iv.
229, 231.

88.
Salutary
results thence
arising.

By the incessant efforts of Wellington every department, both in the British and Portuguese service, was put on a better footing during the campaign: the government at Lisbon were at length induced to take the requisite steps to recruit the ranks which had been so fearfully thinned by the fatigues and the sickness of the Torres Vedras campaign; the engineer and commissariat service were essentially improved, and all that had been found wanting was obtained from England; the transport and ordnance trains were greatly ameliorated, and the military hospitals relieved of many of those evils which had hitherto been so fatal to the lives of the soldiers. Before the close of the campaign, eighty-four thousand men stood on the rolls of the Allied army, of whom fifty-six thousand were British, and twenty-eight thousand Portuguese; and though, from the extraordinary sickness of the troops, the number in the field never exceeded fifty-

seven thousand, yet the prevailing epidemics rapidly diminished when the cool weather came on; and every thing announced that, before the next campaign opened, seventy thousand men would be present with the standards of Wellington. Finally, the provident care of their chief had materially strengthened the interior defences of the kingdom. The lines of Torres Vedras had been augmented; new ones near Almada, on the southern bank, constructed on a gigantic scale; and such were the preparations made at Lisbon, that the English general contemplated without anxiety an event generally thought probable, and publicly announced in the French newspapers, that the Emperor himself was coming to finish the war at a blow, on the Tagus.¹

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1811.

¹ Nap. iv.
229, 233.
Lond. ii. 236,
237. Gurw.
viii. 222.

Though this design was announced, however, it was no part of Napoleon's intention really to put himself at the head of such an armament. His secret despatches to Joseph, now in great part published by authority of the French War Office,* reveal no trace of any such design; the great reinforcements which he poured into the country in autumn were intended only to compensate the immense losses of the Torres Vedras campaign, and to re-establish on a secure basis the interrupted communications in the northern provinces.

89.
Napoleon's
real inten-
tions at this
period in
regard to the
war in Por-
tugal.

Napoleon's real views at this period were, with more candour than he usually exhibited on such occasions, divulged in his address to the Legislative Body on June 18, 1811.—“Since 1809 the greater part of the strong places in Spain have been taken after memorable sieges, and the insurgents have been beaten in a great number of pitched battles. England has felt that the war is approaching a termination, and that intrigues and gold are no longer sufficient to nourish it: she has found herself obliged, therefore, to alter the nature of her assistance, and from an auxiliary she has become a principal. All her troops of the line have been sent to the Peninsula: English blood has at length flowed in torrents in several actions glorious to the French arms. This conflict with Carthage, which seemed as if it would be decided upon the ocean, or beyond the seas, will henceforth be carried on upon the plains of Spain.

90.
His attention
was entirely
fixed on
Russia.

* See BELMAS, *Journaux des Sièges dans la Péninsule*, vol. i. App. No. 47 to 92.

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¹ Moniteur,
16th June,
1811.

² Berthier to
Marmont,
Sept. 18,
1811. Belm.
I. 585, 587.

When *England shall be exhausted*—when she shall at last have felt the evils which, for twenty years, she has with so much cruelty poured upon the Continent; when half her families shall be in mourning—then shall a peal of thunder put an end to the affairs of the Peninsula, and the destinies of her armies, and avenge Europe and Asia by finishing this second Punic war.”¹ Napoleon neither contemplated nor desired any thing more, at this period, than the re-establishment of the credit of his arms by the capture of Elvas, and the relief of his finances by the quartering of the army of Portugal in the hitherto untouched fields of plunder of the Alentejo.² It was upon Russia and the north of Europe that the whole attention of the Emperor was fixed: the war in Portugal he regarded as a useful auxiliary, which might exhaust the English resources, engross their military force, and prevent them from sending any effectual aid, either in men or money, to the decisive points on the banks of the Niemen. In this view, the balanced success of the campaign of 1811, the constant predictions of the Opposition party in England that Great Britain must finally succumb in the Peninsular struggle, and the brilliant career of Marshal Suchet in Valencia at the same period, were eminently conducive to the ultimate deliverance of Europe, by inspiring the French Emperor with the belief that all danger was now over in that quarter, or would speedily be removed by the accession of the Whigs to office on the termination of the Regency restrictions; and, consequently, that he might safely pursue the phantom of universal empire even to the edge of the snows of Russia.

CHAPTER LXVII.

REVOLUTION IN SOUTH AMERICA.

It was the boast of the Spaniards, as it now is of the English, that the sun never set on their colonial possessions ; and in the magnificent language of the Castilian historians, their monarchs succeeded to the sovereignty of "Spain and the Indies." If the magnitude and splendour of this colonial empire be considered, these high-sounding titles will not appear the flattery of panegyric, but the voice of truth. The regions which were discovered by the genius of Columbus, which yielded to the energy of Pizarro, or were subdued by the cruelty of Cortez, constituted a world within themselves. They were more than double the size, and contained above ten times the agricultural resources, of all Europe taken together. If Spain had been worthy of, and capable of discharging its duty to, this noble colonial empire ; if its inhabitants had possessed the energy and perseverance necessary to penetrate and subdue those boundless wilds ; if its institutions had been fitted to awaken the vigour, and call forth the enterprise, requisite for the settlement of mankind in these magnificent regions ; if its religion had permitted free scope to the energies of men, and yet provided the requisite check on their vices ; the empire of Spain would have been what that of Great Britain is at this time, and to the Castilian, not the Anglo-Saxon race, it would have been given to settle its descendants in half the globe.

The vast continent of South America contains 895,000 square marine leagues, or 7,160,000 square miles, being nearly a fifth part of the habitable globe, which comprises 37,000,000. Three-fourths of this immense surface

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1.
Vast extent
of the Span-
ish colonies.

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2.
Extent of
South
America.

lie in the torrid zone, and share in the luxuriance of vegetation, and unbounded richness as regards the gifts of nature, by which that favoured portion of the globe is distinguished. It is 1680 leagues, or nearly 4280 miles in length from north to south; and its greatest breadth is no less than 1600 leagues, or nearly 4000 miles. If the variety and luxuriance of its productions in those parts which are fertile, and the extraordinary riches of the soil in these tropical regions, are taken into account, it may safely be affirmed that it is capable of containing a fifth of the whole inhabitants of the globe. If it were all as well peopled as the British islands are at this time—which, considering the great extent of mountain wastes in Scotland, Ireland, and some parts of England, does not appear beyond the range of probability—it would contain above fifteen hundred million souls, or nearly twice the whole present population of the earth.^{1*}

¹ Malte
Brun, xi. 478.

3.
Great geo-
graphical
divisions of
the country

South America, like the Italian Peninsula, though embracing a great variety of climates, territories, and vegetable productions, is divided by nature into three great districts, each of which has a totally distinct character imprinted upon it by the hand of nature, and must continue to the end of time to be inhabited by a race of men entirely differing in character, habits, and disposition, from those of the others. The western division is formed by the great chain of the Andes, which runs from north to south over the whole extent of the continent, so near in most places to the Pacific ocean, that but a narrow and broken strip of land lies between their feet and the sea-coast; and, from a distance at sea, the stupendous peaks of the Cordilleras appear to rise from the glassy wave of the Pacific. This mountainous region, or rather vast irregular plateau, is in general elevated about twelve thousand feet above the level of the sea, and is surmounted in its central parts by lofty chains, rising into stupendous peaks from fifteen to twenty-five thousand feet in height, surpassing any in the world, excepting those in the Himalaya range to the north of India, in elevation.²

² Malte
Brun, xi.
478, 479.

This prodigious barrier follows the coasts of the Pacific

* The British Islands, on a surface of 122,000 square English miles, contain 27,000,000 inhabitants by the census of 1841, which is at the rate, on an average, of 221 to the square mile. That rate applied to the 7,160,000 square miles of South America, would give 1,582,360,000 inhabitants.

ocean throughout the whole of South America, from which it is rarely distant more than ten or twelve leagues. Its breadth is various in different places, but in general it is from eighty to a hundred leagues across. In its snowy summits and everlasting glaciers, the chief rivers of this immense continent find their perennial fountains; but for them, the waters of these streams would, for the most part, be dried up by the burning sun during the hot months, and the country be uninhabitable from excessive drought during a considerable portion of the year. The streams which descend towards the Pacific ocean rush in a headlong torrent, so violent as to be a continued rapid, from the height of twelve or sixteen thousand feet to the water's edge, often in a course not more than twenty or thirty leagues in length. Those which flow to the eastward, descend in magnificent cataracts from one table-land to another, until they reach the vast level plains which stretch away towards the Atlantic; and there, uniting together, form those noble rivers which surpass any in the world in volume of waters and length of course.¹

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4.
Prodigious
rivers which
flow from the
Andes.

¹ Malte
Brun, xi.
454, 485.
Humboldt,
Vues et
Monumens,
i. 284, 287.

The second region of South America comprehends a tract of country of equal length with the great range of the Andes, lying immediately to the eastward of it, and from two to three times as broad. It consists of immense sandy or marshy plains, for the most part perfectly flat, and intersected by three prodigious rivers, the La Plata, the Amazons, and the Orinoco, originally descending from the snowy summits of the Andes, into which a host of others, such as the Rio Negro, Yapura, and the Yurua, convey their waters, the smallest of which, having a course of five or six hundred miles in length before they join the main streams to which they are tributary, would bear comparison with the greatest rivers of the European world. Such is the extent of those plains, that they stretch across a whole zone of the globe; and Humboldt has told us, that while one end of the Pampas of Buenos Ayres is charged with the snows of the antarctic circle, the other is overshadowed by the palm-trees of the tropics. Their aspect is peculiar, and inexpressibly striking. Rivalling the ocean in extent and level, the declivity by which the rivers intersecting them flow is so slight that it is in

5.
Second re-
gion of the
Pampas.

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general imperceptible; and a gentle movement of the waters towards the east, alone informs the traveller that the inclination of the continent lies in that direction. Yet even this level expanse has a charm peculiar to itself. In those immense plains, where not a stone or a bush intervenes for hundreds of miles to break the uniformity of the scene, a feeling of sublimity steals over the mind: the nothingness of the individual is felt, as on the boundless surface of the ocean, even by the most inconsiderate. Without any landmark to direct their steps, the stars, as to mariners at sea, form the only guide of the natives; new constellations, unseen in northern latitudes, of unequalled brilliancy, attract the admiration of the European traveller, one of which closely resembles the symbol of the Christian faith; and when reposing at night under the star-bespangled canopy of heaven, he is roused from slumber, and warned to prepare for the fatigues of the following day, by the exclamation from his guide, "Midnight is past: the Cross begins to bend!"¹*

¹ Humboldt, vi. 66. Malte Brun, xi. 480, 486.

6.
Third region,
the Plateau
of Brazil.

The third great region of South America comprises an elevated plateau, intersected with ridges of mountains, lying to the eastward of the Pampas, and between them and the Atlantic ocean. It is less considerable, both in point of length and elevation, than the great chain of the Andes, and does not extend over every part of the continent; but where it exists it forms a mass of lofty

* It is one of the most extraordinary circumstances in the whole history of literature, that this brilliant constellation, visible only from the southern hemisphere, was distinctly foretold by Dante above two hundred years before the Line was crossed by the European.

"Io mi volsi a man destra e posi mente
All' altro polo, e vidi quattro stelle
Non viste mai fuor ch' alla prima gente.

* * * * *
O settentrional vedovo sito,
Poi che privato se' di mirar' quelle!"

DANTE, *Purg.* i. 22.

Humboldt, indeed, has shown that, in the time of the Ptolemies, the southern cross formed by those four stars was visible from the southern parts of Libya, adjoining the Sahara desert; and a tradition of this, he conceives, had reached Dante: but this will hardly explain his allusion to it as visible from the *other pole*. Perhaps it was a tradition from the Phenicians, who circumnavigated the Cape of Good Hope, as they unquestionably did, long before the Christian era.—See HUMBOLDT, *Examen Critique*, iv. 323—a work of vast genius and research. The ancients seemed to have a presentiment of the same great discovery.

"Venient annis secula seris,
Quibus Oceanus vincula rerum
Laxet, et ingens pateat tellus,
Tethysque novas detegat orbes,
Nec sit terris ultima Thule."

HORACE.

plateaus, the higher peaks of which are not inferior to the Pyrenees and Apennines in elevation. Nearly the whole of this eastern mountainous range is embraced in the vast Portuguese dominions of Brazil; the two other regions lie almost exclusively in the Spanish portion of the continent. The Portuguese plateau may be called the temperate zone of South America. Circumstanced midway between the shivering elevation of the Andes and the burning sun of Guiana and Columbia, it brings to maturity in its higher regions the fruits of European, in its sunny valleys the productions of tropical growth. Inconsiderable when compared with the other two, this eastern plateau is yet twice as large as the Spanish peninsula, and three times the size of the whole British islands—on so vast a scale does nature appear in these magnificent regions, and so boundless is the reserve which her wisdom has prepared, to be opened at the appointed season, for the overflowing numbers of the Old World.¹

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¹ Malte
Brun, xi. 479.

The most remarkable feature in South America, next to the stupendous range of the Andes, is its rivers. In the foremost rank is to be placed the superb river of the Amazons. This noble stream, which exceeds in magnitude the largest rivers in the Old World, takes its rise from two sources, the one of which is found in the glaciers of Lauricocha, one of the loftiest of the Cordillera range—the second in the snowy summit of Mount Cailloma, in the same lofty chain. Swelled by the tributary streams of the Yapura and the Rio Negro on the left bank, and by the Madeira, the Yavari, the Yutay, and the Yurua, the Mugua, the Rio de los Capanachuas, and the Pachira, on the right, it flows for a long period through mountain gorges of prodigious depth and surpassing beauty. After emerging from the Andes, it winds in a lazy current through the immense savannahs of South America, and does not reach the ocean till it has run a course of three hundred and fifteen leagues after its junction with the Rio Negro. Its entire course, including its windings, extends over above four thousand miles. Its breadth after it emerges into the plain is generally from two to three miles, and its depth seldom less than eighty fathoms. After its junction with the Xouga, however, its expanse becomes so great that in

7.
Its great
rivers.—The
Amazons.

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mid-channel the opposite coasts can hardly be seen, and it flows in a vast estuary, so level that traces of the tide are perceived at the distance of two hundred and fifty leagues from the sea coast. A vehement struggle ensues at its mouth between the river flowing down and the tide running up; twice every day they dispute the pre-eminence, and animals equally with men withdraw from the terrible conflict. In the shock of the enormous masses of water, a ridge of surf and foam is often raised to the height of a hundred and eighty feet; the islands in the neighbourhood are shaken by the strife; the fishers, the boatmen, and the alligators withdraw trembling from the shock. At spring-tides, such is the vehemence of this collision, that the opposite waves precipitate themselves on each other like hostile armies; the shores are covered to a great distance on either side with volumes of foam; huge rocks, whirled about like barks, are borne aloft on the surface; and the awful roar, re-echoed from island to island, gives the first warning to the far-distant mariner that he is approaching the shores of South America.¹

¹ Riccioli,
(Geog. x. cvii.
Malte Brun,
ii. 227, and
xi. 480, 481.
La Conda-
mine, 173.

8.
The Rio de
la Plata.

The second great river of South America is the Rio de la Plata, which, like the river of the Amazons, takes its rise in the Andes, and is formed by the confluence of several streams descending from their snowy summits. Of these, the Parana is the most considerable. This great river, after wandering long through the mountains, issues from their gorges by the cataract of Parana—a fearful rapid twelve leagues in length, near the town of Guayra, where the descending torrent forces its headlong course with incredible violence through walls of rock, often overhanging, of stupendous elevation. Arrived in the great plains, the Parana is swelled by the waters of the Paraguay, one of the tributary streams of which, the Pilcomayo, descends from the neighbourhood of Potosi, and affords the means of water communication to the celebrated silver mines at that place. It is afterwards augmented in its course by the Vermigo and Solado, charged with the melted snows of the Cordilleras, and by the broad waves of the Uruguay, which descend from the mountains of Brazil. The junction of all these rivers forms the majestic Rio de la Plata,² which equals the

² Malte
Brun, xi. 481,
482. Hum-
boldt, Tab-
leaux de la
Nature, ii.
175.

river of the Amazons in breadth and volume of waters, but is inferior to it in length ; because its mouth, which is nearly of the size of the British Channel, is to be regarded rather as an arm of the sea than the estuary even of one of the largest rivers in existence.

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1812.

The third great-river of this immense continent is the Orinoco, which, though far exceeding any in Europe in magnitude, is inferior to the two others. It takes its rise in the lake of Ipava, situated only five degrees to the south of the line, in a branch of the Andes ; and, after traversing the vast lake or permanent swamp of Parima, and receiving the tributary waters of the Guyavari and other great streams, it pursues its lazy course through dark overhanging forests, charged with the humidity, and abounding with the luxuriant vegetation, of tropical climates, by a course fourteen hundred miles long, to the sea. Though its length is thus not a third that of the Amazons, yet it receives such a prodigious accession of waters in those shady forests, into which even the burning sun of the tropics can hardly penetrate, and where three times the rain usual in Britain falls annually,* that it discharges an immense volume of water, hardly inferior to either of its gigantic rivals, into the ocean. So vast is its extent, that the mouth of the Orinoco resembles a shoreless lake rather than the estuary of a river ; and it is with great difficulty that ships, even with the aid of a strong east wind, can make good the entrance. Huge detached cliffs, the remains of an old rocky barrier broken through by the current, which once joined the island of Trinidad to the opposite coast of Paria, start up here and there in this water, as if to furnish a perpetual memorial of the magnitude of the force which had swept the intermediate parts away. There is little struggle here, as at the mouth of the river of the Amazons, between the tide and the stream : the ocean appears to receive with complacency its magnificent tributary ; and far beyond sight of the shore its waters are parted by the white waters of the river, which, clearly defined, strangely contrast with the clear blue waves of the deep. It was upon entering into this vast

* The average fall of rain on the east coast of England is twenty-four inches a-year ; on the banks of the Orinoco it is seventy-two inches.

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¹ Herrera,
Hist. de las
Indias Occid-
entales. Dec.
1, lib. 3, c.
12. Malte
Brun, xi. 483.

current of fresh water, that Columbus, while yet far from the mainland, became convinced he was approaching a great continent. His sagacious mind at once perceived that so immense a volume of fresh water could have been collected only on an extensive surface of land; while his ardent imagination, fraught with oriental imagery, thought he perceived in the serenity of the air, the clearness of the firmament, and the embalmed breezes which, even at that distance, were wafted from its flowery shores, unequivocal marks of his approach to Paradise, from which the four great rivers of the earth took their course.¹

10.
Opposite
character of
the natives
on the two
sides of the
Orinoco.

Between the third and fourth degrees of latitude, the Orinoco separates not only the great forest of Parima from the naked savannahs of the Apure, the Meta, and the Guyavari, which stretch away without intermission to the snows of the antarctic circle, but it forms the limit also between two hordes of men of entirely different character, disposition, and habits. On the south-west wander, amidst plains destitute of trees, and savannahs stretching as far as the waters of the Atlantic, savage tribes, indolent in their habits, dirty in their persons, ferocious in their disposition; but energetic in their desires, glorying in their independence, capable of extraordinary occasional effort. They are the nomads of South America; and in them is now to be found the germ of those pastoral nations which, in every age of the world, have exercised so important an influence on the fortunes of the species. Mounted on the hardy and active steeds which, first introduced by their Spanish conquerors, and descended from the Andalusian stock, have multiplied to an incredible extent in the Pampas of the New World, they wander at will over the prodigious tract of open pastures which stretch from the banks of the Orinoco to the frontiers of Patagonia. To the north-east of that river, and amidst the streams which are nourished under the shades of its impervious forests, are to be found tribes of a totally different character. Mild, tranquil, easy of government, inclined to industry, they readily embrace the discipline of the missionaries, and engage without reluctance in the labours of agriculture. The language of those opposite tribes is as much opposed

in character, as their habits or the physical objects with which they are surrounded. On the savannahs it is energetic, rough, and impassioned; in the forests it is soft, melodious, and abounding in circumlocutions. So clearly has nature, in all parts of the world, imprinted the same opposite characters upon the sojourners in the fields and the shepherds in the plains.¹

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¹ Humboldt,
vii. 17, 18.

The scenery in the tropical regions of the New World is so essentially different from what is to be met with in any part of Europe, that it is hardly possible to those who have not seen it to convey any conception of its beauty. The view from the rock of Marini of the rapids of the Orinoco, is one of the most striking, and has been thus described by the hand of a master:—"When we arrived," says Humboldt, "at the top of the cliff, the first object which caught our eye was a sheet of foam, a mile in extent. Enormous masses of dark rock, of an iron hue, started up here and there out of its snowy surface. Some resembled huge basaltic cliffs resting on each other; others, castles in ruins, with detached towers and fortalices guarding their approach from a distance. Their sombre colour formed a contrast with the dazzling whiteness of the foam. Every rock, every island, is covered with flourishing trees, the foliage of which is often united above the foaming gulf by creepers hanging in festoons from their opposite branches. The base of these rocks and islands, as far as the eye can reach, is lost in the volumes of white smoke which boil above the surface of the river; but above these snowy clouds, noble palms, from eighty to a hundred feet in height, rise aloft, stretching their summits of dazzling green towards the clear azure of heaven. With the changes of the day, these rocks and palm-trees are alternately illuminated by the brightest sunshine, or projected in deep shadow on the surrounding surge. Never does a breath of wind agitate the foliage, never a cloud obscure the vault of heaven. A dazzling light is ever shed through the air, over the earth enamelled with the loveliest flowers, over the foaming stream stretching as far as the eye can reach. The spray glittering in the sunbeam forms a thousand rainbows, ever changing, yet ever bright, beneath whose arches islands of flowers, rivalling the very hues of heaven,

11.

Magnificent
scene in the
cataracts of
the Orinoco.

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Humboldt,
vii. 171, 172.

12.
Scenes in the
forests of the
Orinoco.

flourish in perpetual bloom. There is nothing austere or sombre as in northern climates, even in this scene of elemental strife: tranquillity and repose seem to sleep on the very edge of the abyss of waters. Neither time, nor the sight of the Cordilleras, nor a long abode in the charming valleys of Mexico, have been able to efface from my recollection the impression made by these cataracts. When I read the descriptions of similar scenes in the East, my mind sees again in clear vision the sea of foam, the islands of flowers, the palm-trees surmounting the snowy vapours. Such recollections, like the memory of the sublimest works of poetry and the arts, leave an impression which is never to be effaced, and which, through the whole of life, is associated with every sentiment of the grand and the beautiful."¹

Hardly inferior to this magnificent scene, though of a very different character, is the aspect of the great forests through which part of the Orinoco flows. Vast level plains are there covered with trees, which, rising to a hundred and eighty or two hundred feet in height, overshadow the humid surface of the earth. Round their base clusters a stratum of underwood, so dense that the paths which wild animals have made through its thickets, resemble arches cut out of rock rather than passages through a leafy wilderness. Creepers of various kinds, and bearing in general splendid blossoms, surmount this thicket, and sometimes reach the summits of the loftiest trees. Nor are these dark retreats destitute of inhabitants: on the contrary, animal life swarms there with a prodigality equal to that of vegetable. Alligators are so frequent on the shores of the river and its tributary streams, that for a distance of several hundred miles the traveller has hardly ever less than five or six of them in sight at the same time. Parrots of various species and brilliant plumage: birds innumerable, from the scarlet flamingo to the tiny humming-bird, nestle in every branch; while the thickets swarm with wild animals in such prodigious numbers, that it appears hardly conceivable how they can all find subsistence. Tigers, tapirs, jaguars, monkeys, wild-boars, deer, besides smaller quadrupeds, abound in every direction; and, by a peculiarity very remarkable, and unknown elsewhere, they all begin

at the same hour of the night to raise their respective cries, and fill the forest with a chorus so loud and dissonant that sleep is for hours impossible to the wearied traveller. So universal and well known is this custom, that the monks, in their journeys on the shores of the Orinoco, before lying down, pray "for a quiet night and rest as other mortals." It is not without design that this prodigious exuberance of animal and vegetable life is found in the dark forests of the Orinoco. By the remains of their mingled debris, which accumulate for centuries in undisturbed repose beneath the leafy canopy and in a humid soil, a deep alluvial mould of the richest quality is formed: every successive year adds a few inches to the fertile deposit; and in the scene of present solitude, in depths now pierced only by the cries of the forest, are preparing, by an unseen hand, the means of happiness and the voice of praise.¹

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¹ Humboldt,
vi. 221, 223.

The savannahs of South America are sometimes called meadows or *prairies*; but this name is not properly applicable to pastures, which are often extremely dry, though covered with grass four or five feet in height. They are true steppes; differing from those of the Old World only in the remarkable circumstance, that great part of them are situated in the torrid zone, and subject to the most vehement action of the sun's rays; while those of Asia are all on elevated plateaus, and in temperate or frigid latitudes. On this account the immense plains between the Orinoco and the Amazons river, which are little raised above the level of the sea, would be in great part uninhabitable, and in fact a blowing desert, like the Sahara of Africa, were it not for the extraordinary flat surface which they present, and which renders the most part of them liable to be periodically overflowed by the waters of both these immense rivers and their tributary streams. So dead, indeed, is the flat between the Orinoco and the river of the Amazons, that it has now been ascertained, by undoubted evidence, that their waters communicate with each other; for M. Humboldt actually navigated, on an inland branch called the Casiquiari, from the Rio Negro, a tributary of the Amazons, to the Orinoco. The same communication exists in other lesser branches of both rivers. Thus nature has provided,

13.
The Pampas.

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¹ Malte
Brun, xi. 484,
485. Hum-
boldt, vi. 44,
47.

in the flat surface of these immense steppes, and the gigantic barrier of snow which lies behind them, the means of perpetual irrigation and perennial fertility. The reservoirs exist in exhaustless numbers in the glaciers of the Andes; the great arteries of the system are already formed by the level rivers; nothing is wanting but the steady hand of laborious industry to conduct the little rills, as in Lombardy or Mesopotamia, to the meadows and gardens of civilised man.¹

14.
Their sin-
gular aspect.

During the rainy season the Pampas exhibit a beautiful verdure; but when the great droughts succeed, they assume the appearance of a desert in those places which are elevated, even by a few inches, above the level of the inundation of the rivers. The grass then disappears; the earth becomes reduced to dust; huge crevices yawn in its parched surface; the crocodiles and the large serpents lie buried in the dried mud, where they remain torpid till the first waters of spring waken them from their long slumber. These phenomena are exhibited in all those portions of the Llanos where the soil is not traversed by rivers; but where this is the case, and on the edge of the brooks or lakes where the traveller meets with water, he finds, even during the season of most extreme drought, herbage and wild bushes surmounted by the palm, the branches of which, spreading out like a fan, cast a steady shadow on the sand at its feet.²

² Humboldt,
vii. 44, 45.

15.
Enormous
extent of the
Savannahs.

The greater part of these immense savannahs are not elevated more than two or three hundred feet above the level of the sea; and this declivity, diffused over a distance of a thousand or twelve hundred miles, renders it almost insensible at any one place. Often in a space of a thousand square miles, there is not an eminence a foot high. If a wave fifty fathoms in height were to rise from the sea at the mouth of the Orinoco, it would break upon the foot of the Andes, eight hundred miles distant. In consequence, the least east wind, or any considerable flood in the rivers, makes their waters regorge and overspread a vast extent of level ground, which immediately becomes covered with the richest herbage. So flat is the surface thus flooded, that it is reached at once by the inundations of the Orinoco and the Amazons; and, in the expressive language of the natives, the subsiding waters "do not

know which way to run." In consequence, the earth, even when the surface is perfectly dry, is, at the depth of a few feet, saturated with moisture; and every where in the Llanos, at the depth of ten feet, fine and abundant springs are to be met with, flowing in a stratum of red conglomerate. One of these vast plains—that lying between the mouths of the Orinoco and the town of Araura, and from San Carlos to the savannahs of Caqueta—is one hundred and eighty leagues long by two hundred broad, and contains seventeen thousand square leagues, about the area of France. Another across the Pampas of Buenos Ayres to the foot of the Andes, is three hundred and eighty leagues, or nine hundred miles broad—as far as from London to Genoa; and above six hundred leagues, or fifteen hundred miles long—a distance as great as from London to Naples. These plains in all contain two hundred and twenty thousand square marine leagues, or one million seven hundred and sixty thousand square miles. Vast as is this extent, the uniformity of their surface, varied only here and there in the northern parts by a solitary palm, the waving of the long herbage before the wind, like the surges of the sea, and the unchanging aspect of the horizon, round as a girdle, which appears constantly to recede from the traveller, make them appear larger even than they are, and produces on the mind a mingled impression of sublimity and melancholy.¹

¹ Humboldt, vi. 44, 46, 51. Malte Brune, xi. 484, 494.

If these American steppes had possessed an animal adequate to yielding milk for human sustenance, and another capable of bearing man, they would have become, even anterior to the Spanish invasion, the abode of great and powerful wandering nations, who would have multiplied as rapidly as the herds in their native wilds, and exercised as powerful an influence on the character of the species and the fortunes of the empires which arose to greatness in the New World, as the Tartars have done in every age in the old. But the want of any such companions to man entirely prevented this result, and rendered the history of civilisation wholly different in America from what it has been in Europe and Asia. Anterior to the Spanish invasion, no animal capable of nourishing the human species, like the cow, or of conveying them from place to place, like the horse or the

16. Extraordinary effect of the want of the horse and cow in America, anterior to the Spanish invasion.

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camel, existed in the New World; the strongest beast of burden they possessed, the lama, of Peru, was wholly unequal to the fatigues, and unfit for the wants, of a wandering life. Thence the total want, in every period of the native history of America, of that great family of mankind, the *nomad tribes*. Had they possessed such auxiliaries—had the countless herds of cattle and troops of horses which now wander over these boundless wilds, always existed to feed the numbers, and triple the strength of man in his native solitudes, the empires of New Grenada and Peru would have been repeatedly overturned, like those of the Assyrians and Medes, by the arms of the shepherd kings. The energy of the desert would have been engrafted on the riches of civilisation; the feeble and debasing government of a false theocracy would have been supplanted by the energetic spirit of roving independence; and when the Spaniards appeared on their coasts, instead of a meek race, who tendered their necks to the yoke and their riches to the ravisher, they would have encountered the lances of freemen, who would have equalled them in valour, and speedily hurled them back into the waves. It was not without a deep prophetic insight into the history of the species, that the dog and the horse were made the companions, cattle and sheep the attendants, of man. But for these he never could have emerged from his native seats; and the iron race of Japhet itself, instead of, in obedience to the Divine precept, overspreading the earth, and subduing it, would have been wandering in impotent barbarism amidst the mountains of the Caucasus.¹

¹ Humboldt,
vi. 69, 72.

17.
Vast forest
region of
Central
America.

These immense savannahs of South America run down the centre of the continent, and in the basin of the river of the Amazons, from the sea to the Andes. But in the centre of the country, midway between the waters of that stupendous stream and those of the Rio de la Plata, a prodigious tract of country is to be found, partly in the Brazilian, partly in the Spanish territory, which is entirely covered with forests. More than half the feeders of those gigantic rivers take their rise in this immense woody region; it is amidst its deep solitudes, and under the shadow of its impenetrable boughs, that great part of their everlasting fountains are found. This tract of

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forest overspreads both mountain and plain; in some places it covers rocky ranges as lofty as the Pyrenees, in other level plains as uniform as Lombardy, and extends from 18° south latitude to 8° north. The area it contains embraces no less than a hundred and twenty thousand square leagues, or nine hundred and sixty thousand square miles, more than six times the area of France, and nearly equal to the whole peninsula of Hindostan south of the Himalaya mountains*—on so vast a scale is the reserve of nature outspread in the New World. Ample provision for the increase of man is already made in these forests; there is not one tree in a hundred of the palm tribe, which constitutes a large proportion of the woods, which does not bear fruit adapted for his sustenance.† This immense region is for the most part uninhabited; no other roads are known through its depths but the beds of rivers; and the knowledge of the European concerning it is limited to the immediate vicinity of its principal streams. At distant intervals only, the perseverance of the Indians with difficulty finds a path through its umbrageous thickets. Impervious to savage, the whole of this region is yet destined to yield to the efforts of civilised man. Steam navigation will ascend its innumerable streams; laborious industry will find ample recompense in its virgin mould; and on the theatre of present solitude will one day appear the abodes, the virtues, and the vices of civilised man.¹

¹ Humboldt,
vi. 55, 57.

The immense chain of the Andes traversing its whole extent near the Pacific ocean, has stamped a character upon South American nature which belongs to no other country. The peculiarity which distinguishes the regions which belong to this immense chain, are the successive plateaus, like so many huge natural terraces, which rise one above another before arriving at the great central chains, where the highest summits are to be found. Such is the elevation of some of those lofty plains, that they often exceed eight and nine, and sometimes reach that of

18.
Peculiarities
of nature in
the chain of
the Andes.

* India in all contains 1,287,000 square miles; the British dominions in it are 512,000 square miles.—*Commons' Report*, 11th Oct. 1831; ELPHINSTONE'S *India*, i. 5.

† "Sur des millions de troncs des palmiers surchargés de fruit en forme d'olive, nous en trouvâmes à peu près un centième sans fruit."—HUMBOLDT, ix. 89.

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twelve thousand feet above the level of the sea. The lowest of these plateaus is higher than the summit of the pass of the Great St Bernard, the most elevated inhabited ground in Europe.* But such is the benignity of the climate, that at these prodigious elevations, which even in the south of Europe are above the line of perpetual snow, are to be found cities and towns, corn-fields and orchards, and all the symptoms of rural felicity. The town of Quito itself, the capital of a province of the same name, is situated on a plateau in the centre of the Andes, nine thousand five hundred feet above the level of the sea. Yet there are found concentrated a numerous population; and the plateau contains cities with thirty, forty, and even fifty thousand inhabitants. "After living," says Humboldt, "some months on this elevated ground, you experience an extraordinary illusion. Finding yourself surrounded with pastures and corn-fields, flocks and herds, smiling orchards and golden harvests, the sheep and the lama, the fruits of Europe and those of America, you forget that you are, as it were, suspended midway between earth and heaven, and elevated to a height exceeding that of the loftiest passes by which the European traveller makes his way from France into Italy, and double that of Ben Nevis, the highest mountain in Great Britain."¹

¹ Humboldt, *Regions Equatoriales*, 122, 130. Malte Brun, xi. 489, 490.

19.
Different productions of the different elevations in South America.

The different gradations of vegetation, as might be expected in a country where the earth rises from the torrid zone by a few steep ascents to the region of eternal congelation, form one of the most remarkable characteristics of this land of wonders. From the borders of the sea to the height of two thousand feet are to be found the magnificent palm-tree, the Musa, the Heliconia, the balms of Tolu, the large flowering jasmin, the date-tree, and all the productions of tropical climates. On the arid shores of the ocean flourish, in addition to these, the cotton-tree, the magnolia, the cactus, and the luscious fruits which ripen under the genial sun and amidst the balmy breezes of the West India islands. One only of these tropical children of nature, a species of palm,† is met with far in advance of the rest of its tribe, tossed by the winds at the

* It is 7545 feet above the level of the sea.—EBEL, *Manuel du Voyageur en Suisse*, i. 178.

† The Carosylou Andicola.—HUMBOLDT, *Tableau des Regions Equatoriales*, 59.

height of seven and eight thousand feet above the sea in the Cordillera range. In this region, as nature exhibits the riches, so it has spread the pestilence of tropical regions. The humidity of the atmosphere, and the damp heat which is nourished amidst its intricate thickets, produces violent fevers, which often prove extremely destructive, especially to European constitutions. But if the patient survives the first attack, a remedy is at hand ; a journey to the temperate climate of the elevated plateaus soon restores health, and the sufferer is as much revived by the gales of the Andes, as the Indian valetudinarian is by a return to Europe.

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Above the region of the palms commences the temperate zone. It is there that vegetation appears in its most delightful form ; luxuriant without being rank, majestic yet not impervious, it combines all that nature has given of the grand, with all that poets have figured of the beautiful. The bark-tree, which she has provided as the only effectual febrifuge in the deadly heats of the inferior region ; the cyperus and melastoma, with their superb violet blossoms ; gigantic fuschias of every possible variety, and evergreen trees of lofty stature covered with flowers, adorn that delightful zone. The turf is enamelled by never-fading flowers ; mosses of dazzling beauty, fed by the frequent rains attracted by the mountains, cover the rocks ; and the trembling branches of the mimosa, and others of the sensitive tribe, hang in graceful pendants over every declivity. Almost all the flowering shrubs which adorn our conservatories are to be found there in primeval beauty, and upon what to Europeans appears a gigantic scale ; magnificent arums of many different kinds spread their ample snowy petals above the surrounding thickets ; and innumerable creepers, adorned by splendid blossoms, mount to the summits even of the highest trees, and diffuse a perennial fragrance around.²

¹ Malte Brun, xi. 498, 497. Humboldt Reg. Equat. 59.

20.
The temperate zone.

² Humboldt, Tableau des Reg. Equit. 140, 144. Malte Brun, xi. 498, 499.

The oaks and trees of Europe are not found in those parts of the Andes which lie in the torrid zone, till you arrive at the height of five thousand feet. It is there that you first begin to see the leaves fall in autumn and bud in spring, as in European climates ; below that level the foliage, as in all tropical regions, is perpetual. Nowhere are the trees so large as in this region : not unfrequently

21.
The higher or frigid zone.

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they are found of the height of a hundred and sixty or a hundred and eighty feet; their stems are sometimes from eight to fifteen feet across at their base, and rise a hundred feet without a single cross-branch. When so great an elevation as the plain of Quito, however, which is nine thousand five hundred and fifteen feet above the sea, is reached, they become less considerable, and not larger than those usually found in the forests of Europe. If the traveller ascends two thousand feet higher, to an elevation of eleven or twelve thousand feet, trees almost entirely disappear; but the frequent humidity nourishes a thick covering of arbutus three or four feet high, and flowering shrubs, the blossoms of which, generally of a bright yellow, form a striking contrast to the dark evergreen foliage in which they are embedded. Still higher, at the height of thirteen thousand feet, near the summit of the Cordilleras, almost constant rains overspread the earth with a verdant and slippery coating of moss, amidst which a few stunted specimens of the *melastoma* still exhibit their purple blossoms. A broad zone succeeds, covered entirely with alpine plants, which, as in the mountains of Switzerland, nestle in the crevices of rocks, or push their flowers, generally of yellow or dark blue, through the now frequent snow. Higher still, grass alone is found, mingled with gray moss, which conducts the wearied traveller to the region of perpetual snow, which in those warm latitudes is general only at an elevation of fourteen thousand feet. Above that level no animated being is found except the huge condor, the largest bird that exists, which in these immense solitudes, amidst ice and clouds, has fixed its gloomy abode.^{1*}

1 Humboldt,
Reg. Equat.
141. 144.
Malte Brun,
xi. 499, 501.

22.
Extraordi-
nary fertility
of the soil
in great part
of this
country.

In a country of such vast extent, embracing so many different latitudes, from the heats of the torrid to the ice of the frozen zone, and combining every variety of climate in one vicinity, from the burning swamps of Guiana to the shivering summit of Chimborazo, a large portion of the country is necessarily sterile and desolate. Yet such is the fertility of the soil in other places, that it may be doubted whether, on an average of the whole surface, it does not reach the productive powers of the

* See Appendix, A, Chap. lxvii., where the height of the chief mountains in the world is given.

most favoured European territory. A long line of desolation along their whole extent marks the summit of the Andes, from the Isthmus of Darien to Cape Horn; a considerable proportion of its collateral ridges is sterile in the higher districts; the mountains of Brazil, covered with forests, are in part incapable of human habitation, and vast tracts in the Pampas and Llanos, destitute of perennial water, seem chained to the pastoral state to the end of the world. But with these exceptions, almost the whole country is susceptible of cultivation, and a considerable part is so fertile, that the rich productions of tropical climates yield an almost inconceivable amount of subsistence for the use of man.¹

Such is the fertility of the soil, and so wonderful are the productive powers of nature, that wheat in South America usually produces seventy, in some instances a hundred-fold. The average of all England is only nine-fold. This prodigious increase is obtained with hardly any attention to culture, as the operation of hoeing or weeding crops is unknown, and the earth is merely scratched with a plough of the rudest construction, or with the branches of a tree. When the seed is sown, it is not even cleared of the bushes and stumps of trees which encumber it. Vegetation is exceedingly vigorous in the Pampas; and in those situations where the soil is reached by the overflowing of the streams, which embrace two-thirds of the surface, it rivals in riches the Delta of Egypt. Three days' work in the week would make the inhabitants perfectly comfortable. The mind of the traveller who surveys the boundless tracts of fertile land, which here stretch out neglected and unappropriated for thousands of miles, and recollects the multitudes who pine for employment in his own country, the fierce contests for tracts of territory not a hundredth part the size of these, which in every age have drenched the Old World with blood, is filled with an irresistible feeling of melancholy. He learns how great is the beneficence of God, how little the animosities of men.²

Locally situated in North America, MEXICO, from climate, institutions, and nation, belongs to the Spanish portion of the New World. Containing within itself the elements of a mighty empire, it seems destined, like Canada,

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¹ Malte Brun, xi. 500, 501. Miller, i. 146.

23.
Vast productive powers of nature in South America.

² Miller, ii. 259, 336. Humboldt, iii. 29, 36. xix. 152, 252.

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24.
Description
of Mexico.

to open for ages to come its capacious arms to receive the overflowing population of the other hemisphere. It possesses a territory of above a million of geographical square miles, thinly populated at this time by nearly eight millions of inhabitants,* showing just eight to the square mile; while in England the proportion to the same space is three hundred. The Rocky Mountains run like a huge backbone through its whole territory from north to south, rising occasionally into stupendous volcanic peaks, which in some places attain the height of sixteen and seventeen thousand feet.† These mountains, which spread their ramifications through a great portion of the country, are stored with the richest veins of gold and silver; and these minerals are in great part found, not at the shivering elevation of ten or twelve thousand feet above the sea, as in South America, but at the comparatively moderate height of three or four thousand. Vast lakes, most of which are rapidly filling up, are to be found in many of the lofty valleys; and plateaus or table-lands of prodigious extent, like so many successive terraces or steps from the sea-shore to the Cordilleras, give every variety of climate, from the warmth of the tropics to the cold of everlasting snow.¹

¹ Malte
Brun, xi. 363.
Balbi, 1017,
1037.

25.
First ascent
from the
Terra Cali-
ente, or hot
region.

Nature exhibits in the different gradations of this ascent the same luxuriant and dazzling beauty as in the slopes of the Andes in South America. First, on the sea-shore, is the *terra caliente*—the hot region—the country of the vanilla, the cochineal, and the cocoa, which are there indigenous; and now, in addition to these, of the orange and the sugar-cane, which have been introduced by European industry. Here the flowers and the fruits follow one another, in an unbroken circle, through the whole year; the gales are loaded with perfumes which almost make the senses ache with their sweetness; and the groves are filled with many-coloured birds and insects, whose

* The numbers were 7,687,000 by the census of 1841.—*American Statistical Almanac* for 1841, 267.

† The following are the heights of some of the highest in the range—

	Feet.
Grand Volcano Popocatepetl,	17,716
Pic d'Orizaba,	17,390
Sierra Nevada,	14,166
Nevada de Toluco,	14,184

—HUMBOLDT, ii. 421; and MALTE BRUN, xi. 373.

enamelled wings glisten like diamonds in the bright sun of the tropics. Yet the same prolific sun has here provided the usual compensation, conspicuous alike in the material as in the moral world, for extraordinary advantages. His ardent rays, which awaken into life these glories of the animal and vegetable kingdoms, call forth the pestilent *malaria*, the deadly yellow fever, and a whole train of bilious disorders unknown in the more temperate regions of the north. When the level country is passed, and the ascent of the mountains begins, more magnificent features entrance the soul of the traveller. As he toils up the steep acclivity of many days' continued journey, the Sierra Madre, girt with its dark belt of pines, stretches as a huge barrier to the north and west. To the south, in brilliant contrast, seen through the openings of the pine-clad cliffs, rises the mighty Orizaba, with his white robe of snow descending far down his sides, towering in solitary grandeur, the giant spectre of the Andes. To the east spreads out like a garden the magnificent *terra caliente*, with its gay confusion of meadows, streams, and flowering forests interspersed with Indian villages; while a faint blue line on the verge of the horizon marks the distant surface of the Gulf of Mexico.¹

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¹ Prescott's
Conquest of
Mexico i. 357,
359.

When the level surface of the great plateau of Mexico is reached, spreading out several hundred miles at the summit of the first step of the Cordilleras, the productions and aspect of nature are very different. The oak and the beech recall to the European the land of his birth. The country bears the mark of careful cultivation, and magnificent crops of maize and wheat overshadow, as in Lombardy, the prolific soil. Yet traces of the sun of the tropics still appear in this elevated region—fields and hedges of the various tribes of the cactus, with their splendid scarlet blossoms, and plantations of aloes with rich yellow clusters of flowers on their tall stems, affording at once drink and clothing for the use of man. The plants of the torrid zone are no longer to be seen; but those which have succeeded them are still more prolific than those of northern regions. The glossy, dark-leaved banana, with its profusion of nutritious fruit, has disappeared; but the hardy maize with its golden

26.
Character of
the great
plateau of
Mexico.

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Prescott's
Conquest of
Mexico, i.
361, 362.

harvest, in all the pride of cultivation, is still the great staple of human subsistence ; while the vine clustering round every tree, and the most delicious fruits of Europe become indigenous in these fertile regions, convey that impression of general ease and happiness which forms the greatest of the many charms of the shores of the Mediterranean.¹

27
Description
of the city of
Mexico.

The city of MEXICO, the capital of this extraordinary and beautiful country, is built in so singular a situation, and surrounded by such extraordinary objects, that the accounts of it would pass for fabulous, if they were not authenticated by the concurring testimony of travellers of every age and nation. Placed in a level plain, surrounded by mountains which, even under a tropical sun, preserve their snowy mantle all the year round, it is seven thousand two hundred feet (English) above the level of the sea ; and yet it stands in the midst of a great lake, which can be reached only by long causeways traversing the water. These causeways, the work of the ancient native sovereigns of Mexico, were the theatre of desperate conflicts between the Mexicans and the allied force under Cortes, in the memorable siege of the capital ; and one, on which the disasters of the "*noche triste*" were experienced, has been illustrated by modern genius with all the colours of poetry.* The city, which is traversed by canals in every direction, which intersect the paved streets, contains three hundred churches, many of which are resplendent with the gold and silver which are, as it were, the natural produce of the country. Though greatly declined from its former grandeur, it still contains one hundred and eighty thousand souls, and abounds with monuments alike of ancient and modern magnificence. The waters of the lake have receded much since the time when the lances of Cortes first approached its shores, and the city in consequence no longer rises, like Venice, from a waste of waters ; but still its appearance, in the midst of its splendid amphitheatre of mountains, is inexpressibly striking ; and the first view of it on emerging from these mountains produces an impression on the spectator which neither time nor distance can efface.²

¹ Malte
Brun, xi. 438,
444. Hum-
boldt,
Mexico, ii. c.
8. Prescott's
Conquest of
Mexico, i.
399, 401.

* Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico*, vol. ii.

If great part of the country in the highest or snowy region is rocky, parched, and sterile, ample compensation is afforded in the surpassing fertility of the lower valleys of the other districts. Humboldt has told us that he was never wearied with wondering at the smallness of the portion of soil which, in Mexico and the adjoining provinces, would yield sustenance to a family for a year; and that the same extent of ground, which in wheat would maintain only two persons, would yield sustenance, in South America, under the bannian to fifty; though in this favoured region also, as already stated, the return of wheat is never under seventy, sometimes as much as a hundred-fold.¹ The return, on an average, of Great Britain, it has been mentioned, is not more than nine to one. If due weight be given to these extraordinary facts, it will not appear extravagant to assert that Mexico, with a territory embracing seven times the whole area of France, may at some future, and possibly not remote period, contain two hundred millions of inhabitants. But notwithstanding all these advantages, it is more than doubtful whether the Spanish race is destined to perpetuate its descendants, so as to rival the Anglo-Saxon, or at least retain the sovereignty in this country. Compared with the adjoining provinces of the United States or Canada, it appears struck with a social and political palsy. Corruption pervades the higher, indolence and sensuality paralyse the lower orders. The recent successful settlement of a small body of British and American colonists in Texas, a Mexican province, their easy victory over the Mexican troops, the rapid growth of their republic, and the subsequent success of the American invaders over greatly superior bodies of their Mexican opponents, may well suggest a doubt whether priority of occupation and settlement will not in this instance, as it has done in many others, yield to the superiority of race, religion, and political character; and whether to the descendants of the Anglo-Saxon settlers is not ultimately destined the sceptre of the whole North American continent.²

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28.

Vast agricultural
riches, and
capacity for
mankind.¹ Humboldt,
iii. 29, 36;
250, 152.² Malte
Brun, xi. 363,
394. Balbi,
1017, 1037.

Another district of South America, which belongs to the Spanish portion of that continent, both from local

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29.

Description
of Brazil.

situation and national descent, is BRAZIL. This immense kingdom, which appears as it were carved out of the surrounding regions which had yielded to the arms of the Spaniards, and has alone hitherto maintained its monarchical institutions amidst the republics which have every where else sprung up in the New World, is inferior to no part of the adjoining continent, either in the variety or extent of its agricultural and mineral riches. It embraces within its ample, though as yet ill-defined limits, 1,560,000 square miles, being one-fifth of the whole surface of South America, or above ten times the area of France. This immense surface is thinly peopled by five millions of souls, being not four to the square mile; and of these not more than a fourth are of European origin. Great part of the country is mountainous: one chain runs along the course of the river Paraguay, from its source to the mouth of the Jaura, and several others lie in the interior: but an immense district, a hundred leagues long and fifty broad, from the mouth of the Jaura to 22° south latitude, is so flat that it is entirely inundated during the rainy seasons, and exhibits the appearance, like the lagunæ of Venice, of an immense lake, from the surface of which the wooded mountains which adjoin it rise like enchanted islands.¹

¹ Malte Brun, xi. 649, 650. Maude, 97, 149.

30.
Description of
Rio Janeiro,
its capital.

Diamonds and topazes, known all over the world, are found in the beds of the Brazilian rivers; and its mountains abound in valuable minerals. Its capital, Rio Janeiro, now the residence of royalty, and containing a hundred and forty thousand inhabitants, situated in the bottom of a bay, surrounded with wooded mountains of matchless beauty, exceeds even the far-famed capital of Naples in the charm of its surrounding scenery. Its vast harbour, the entrance of which is guarded by the castle of Santa Cruz, is protected from the swell of the Atlantic by numerous islands of granite, which form a natural breakwater effectually sheltering the capacious haven within. All the fleets in the world might lie there in safety, and ships of the line of a hundred and twenty guns touch the quay with their sides. The extraordinary beauty of the islands scattered through the bay, some consisting of bare precipitous rocks, others covered with a brilliant vegetation of orange-trees, palms, jasmins, myrtles, roses,² and other flowering shrubs—some desolate as they came

² Malte Brun, xi. 649, 667. Maude's Travels in Brazil, 97, 149, 296. Acunha de Coutinho, x. 7.

from the hand of nature, others adorned by stately and sumptuous edifices—render this a scene of enchantment to the mariner wearied with the mournful uniformity of the Atlantic ocean.

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The prodigious height of the trees in the forests of this immense country, which often rise to the elevation of two hundred feet from the ground, covered in general with flowering creepers or blossoms of splendid beauty, give a peculiar and extraordinary charm to its vast uninhabited thickets; and nowhere are so strongly verified the words of Scripture, that the “desert blossoms like the rose.” So immense is the size of some of these trees, and the straightness of their stems, that it is not unusual to see a canoe, impelled by twenty rowers, and containing six hundred casks of sugar, hollowed out of a single trunk. Indian corn here, as elsewhere in South America, constitutes the principal food of man; but maize, rice, wheat, and all the grains of temperate regions, flourish in abundance; bannians and sugar, cotton and coffee, grow in luxuriance in the lower regions, and furnish, in proportion to the extent of ground they occupy, an extraordinary amount of produce; the numerous palm-trees with which the forests abound are covered with fruits, some of which produce a rich substance like butter, which fills the dairy; and on the first slopes of the hills, oranges, citrons, grapes, pine-apples, pomegranates, and all the choicest fruits of Europe, ripen in perfection. Were Brazil as well peopled as France, it would contain three hundred and twenty millions of inhabitants, or sixty millions more than all Europe west of the Ural mountains at this time; and, notwithstanding the great amount of this population, such are the agricultural resources of the country, that there can be no doubt it is much less than could be maintained in comfort on its territory.¹

31.
Vast extent
of its agri-
cultural
riches.

¹ Malte Brun,
xi. 660, 669.
La Conda-
mine, voyage
à la Rivière
des Amazons,
91. America
Portuguesa,
i. l. No. 58,
59.

To complete the picture of this interesting portion of the globe, it only remains to give a sketch of its southern extremity, where it terminates in the peninsula of PATAGONIA. The close proximity of this vast region to the antarctic circle, renders its aspect very different from the other parts of the continent. The Andes, which run along the whole western part of the country, till they terminate in the gloomy rocks of Cape Horn, are much less considerable in elevation than in the northern

32.
Description
of Pata-
gonia.

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latitudes, and seldom exceed five thousand feet in height. From their eastern slopes the great rivers of the country take their rise, of which the Colorado and Negro are the most remarkable. Immense plains, some of which are entirely covered with salt, lie on either side of these spacious streams; their aspect is very different from the Llanos and Pampas nearer the Line. Covered for the most part with heath, they have the sombre and melancholy character of the wastes of northern Europe. As you approach the south, vegetation becomes stunted; frequent cascades in the mountains attest the ceaseless humidity of the atmosphere. Ice and snow succeed at a slight elevation from the sea; vast pine forests cover the hills, and the scenery resembles that of Canada or Norway. Yet even here a species of the palm tribe is found, far from the rest of his race, as if to mark the character of the continent in its most distant and inclement extremity.¹

¹ Malte Brun, xi. 638, 641. Fleurieu dans Marchand, 17.

33.
Character
and manners
of the inhabi-
tants.

The inhabitants of the country, so celebrated for their gigantic stature, which is in general six feet, wander like the Tartars over their boundless solitudes, mounted on small horses which they have obtained from the Spaniards, or a sort of asses which appear to be indigenous in its wilds. They are strangers to the comforts and refinements of life; all their habits conduce to hardihood. The god whom they adore is not the beneficent Father of the universe whom the Incas worshipped, but a terrible avenging deity, endowed with all the qualities of the Scandinavian Thor. Mounted on their small but hardy horses, they discharge their slings loaded with stones, with such address as to hit any animal at the distance of four hundred yards. The condition of their women, as in all rude tribes, is degraded. The men seem strangers to the passion of jealousy; hardy offspring is their principal object in marriage, and to obtain them they plunge the young women in water repeatedly at the time of their nuptials. Clothed in skins adorned with plumes and furs, without any iron weapons or implements, they have yet proved a more formidable enemy to the Spaniards than any of the other inhabitants of South America.² With the rudeness and indolence, they have exhibited the fierceness and independence of the savage

² Malte Brun, xi. 631, 645. King's Voyage round Cape Horn, 1826, 74, 97.

character. Brave and persevering, they have long combated for their freedom ; bloody defeats have never been able to break their spirit, and after three centuries of continued conflict, the shepherds of Patagonia, the mountaineers of Araucania, are still unsubdued.

When the adventurous Spaniards, guided by the genius of Columbus, approached the shores of the New World in 1519, they found in many places nations widely differing from those of European descent, and yet far advanced in the career of art and civilisation. Mild and unassuming in their manners, gentle and amiable in their disposition, the inhabitants of Peru had advanced far in the enjoyments and luxuries of pacific life. They had established a regular government for their defence, a state religion for their worship ; they were acquainted with letters and the arts of rural economy ; their skill in some species of manufacture was exquisite ; they had built palaces, cities, and temples ; they had gold and silver ornaments, and wealth, unhappily for them, too tempting to the rapacity of their conquerors. They had many of the graces of the age of gold, but none of the virtues of that of iron. Thence their inability to withstand the shock.* Patriotic in feeling, persevering in resistance, often heroic in suffering, they were destitute of the energy necessary to avoid disaster, or the vigour requisite to triumph over defeat. They met the stroke of fate with the resignation of martyrs, but could not combat it with the spirit of heroes. The debasing sway of a false theocracy had broken their spirit ; the enjoyments of peace had enervated their courage ; undisputed ascendancy over their neighbours had relaxed their prowess.¹

Without iron weapons to enhance their powers ; without horses to triple their speed ; ignorant of fire-arms, or the marvels of European discipline—they threw themselves in crowds before the steel-clad warriors of Castile, and sank in meek desperation before the awful race, who,

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34.
Character of
the Peruvians,
when the
Spaniards
arrived in
1519.

¹ Herrera, l.
ii. c. 10.

* “ Que peuvent tes amis, et leurs armes fragiles,
Ces marbres impuissans en sabres façonnés,
Ces soldats presque nus et mal disciplinés,
Contre ces fiers géans, ces tyrans de la terre,
De fer étincelans, armés de leur tonnerre,
Qui s'élancent sur nous, aussi prompts que les vents,
Sur des monstres guerriers pour eux obéissans ?
L'univers a cédé : cedons, mon cher Zamore.”

VOLTAIRE, *Alzire*, Act ii. Scene 4.

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35.

Their easy
subjugation
by the
Spaniards.

sheathed in impenetrable panoply, mounted on fierce and unknown animals, conveyed by winged monsters across the deep, seemed to wield the thunderbolts of heaven to blast every enemy who opposed them. A dreadful period of suffering and wretchedness succeeded this subjugation ; the unexpected and extraordinary profusion of the precious metals in the New World, proved an irresistible attraction to European cupidity ; fanatical zeal thought it saw in the pagan multitudes who flocked round their idols the fairest theatre for the forcible conversion of the heathen : avarice and fanaticism, the two fiercest passions which can agitate the heart, conspired to impel the Spanish conquerors to unheard-of atrocities ; and the first approach of the gospel of peace and the power of civilisation to the New World, became the signal for universal bloodshed, extortion, and wo.^{1*}

¹ Robertson's
America, lib.
v. and vi.
Herrera, l. ii.
c. 10, 7, 9.

36.

Great effect
of the intro-
duction of
horses and
cattle.

Two circumstances, however, consequent on the irruption of this ruthless band of invaders, laid the foundation for a great ultimate change in the condition of the natives, and are destined in the end to do more than counterbalance all the evils with which the arrival of the European race was at first attended.

The first of these was the introduction of horses and cattle into the savannahs of South America, and the consequent growth of a *nomad* race on the boundless plains, so well fitted for its reception. It has been already mentioned² that the want of these animals had, anterior to the Spanish invasion, both prevented the growth of pastoral nations in the New World, and rendered its inhabitants unable to withstand the shock of their reckless invaders. Unquestionably, when the Spaniards settled in South America, and imposed their cruel yoke on the vanquished, they had no intention of giving them this great advantage, or of communicating to the natives whom they had subdued that energy and those powers which might enable them in future times to overthrow their oppressors. But here, as in other instances, the

² Ante, c.
lxvii. § 16.

* Well might the Spanish rulers say with Alvarez, in Voltaire :—

“ Nous, d’or et de sang toujours insatiables,
Deserteurs de ces lois qu’il fallait enseigner,
Nous égorgéons le peuple, au lieu de le gagner.
Par nous tout est en sang, par nous tout est en poudre,
Et nous n’avons du ciel imité que la foudre.

Alzire, Act i. Scene 1.

hand of nature proved stronger than the arm of man ; and the designs of Providence for the great family of mankind, were worked out alike by the virtues and vices, the defeats and victories, of its varied creatures. The avarice of the Spanish conquerors, their insatiable thirst for gold, the very cruelties which they exercised on the native race, prepared an ultimate but decisive change in the habits and destiny of the species in the New World. The strength of the Indians, even when racked to the utmost to raise the gold and silver ore from the mines, and transport it to the coast, proved unequal to the impatient rapacity of the Spaniards, and horses were introduced in great numbers from Europe to augment their physical powers. Cows and sheep were soon after brought to supply the wants of the European settlers. Some of these animals gradually escaped to the Pampas, others were conveyed thither by the natives who escaped from their intolerable bondage ; their numbers increased with incredible rapidity amidst the boundless savannahs and luxuriant pastures which were there spread out ; the means both of living in these wilds on the produce of the herds, and of wandering at will over the vast expanse, were thus furnished to the frontier inhabitants ; and for the first time in the history of America, a foundation was laid for *nomad nations*. From that moment a different ultimate destiny was imprinted on the New World.¹

While the introduction of the horse and the cow thus laid the foundation in South America of pastoral nations, a change not less important in their character and power was effected by the general use of *iron*, and the intermixture of European blood which followed the settlement of the victors. The rich and tempting mines of Mexico and Peru could only be worked to great profit by the aid of iron implements ; the old native method of washing the sand of rivers for grains of gold or silver ore, was far too slow for the insatiate thirst and boundless expectations of the European race. Iron arms and implements were introduced in large quantities, at once to work their mines and protect their treasures. At the same time, a considerable number of the Spanish settlers escaped from the drudgery of agriculture or the slavery of the mines, and impelled by bankruptcy in civilised, or the attractions

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¹ A zara, Voyage au Paraguay, i. 30. Humboldt, vi. 96, 99.

37. Introduction of iron implements, and intermixture of Spanish blood.

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of independence in savage life, took to the Pampas, and, mounted on their steeds of Andalusian descent, followed their numerous herds over these boundless wilds. Their pride no longer disdained the charms of native beauty; necessity compelled them to form Indian alliances, and gradually there arose a mixed race of men in the Pampas, subsisting like the Tartars entirely by their herds, mounted like them on hardy steeds, but with Castilian blood in their veins and Castilian lances in their hands. The influence of this race on the future fate of South America is destined to be immense. It has already appeared, in a decisive manner, in an important crisis of its history. When the Revolution broke out, *nomads* appeared in the field, but they appeared as victors; and when the scales hung even between the tenacious valour of Old Spain, and the insurgent energy of the colonies, it was by the lances of the pastoral race that the balance was made to preponderate in the decisive battle in favour of independence.* The Spaniards received from the Americans gold, but they gave them iron; and it is by iron alone, in this world, that the real age of gold is to be won.¹

1 Humboldt,
vi. 95, 97.
General
Miller, ii. 76.

38.
Great efforts
of the Mis-
sions in South
America.

The last benefit which the Spaniards have conferred upon the New World, is to be found in the *Missions* which are so generally diffused in all Spanish America, and the habits of industry which they have in many places, to a considerable degree, established among the rude inhabitants of the forest. Universally in South America, as in all barbarous states, the Indians are indolent in the extreme; and it is their general repugnance to labour which is at once the principal cause of their poverty, and the invincible bar to their multiplication. But the Spanish missionaries have laboured with assiduous and heroic zeal to improve the habits of these wandering tribes; and extraordinary success has in many instances attended their efforts. Almost every where in the woods the first traces of industry are to be found in the neighbourhood of the missions—it is by the efforts of these worthy pioneers of civilisation that the wandering savage has, in

* The battle of Ayacucho, which finally established the independence of Peru, was gained by the hussars of Junin, all Gaucho lancers from the Pampas of Columbia, after the insurgent infantry had been totally routed by the Spanish host.—MILLER'S *Memoirs*, vol. ii. 168, 170.

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general, been fixed to one place, and brought to submit to the permanent labours of agriculture. Their success has much exceeded that of the Protestant missionaries (if the Moravians are excepted) in the same sublime attempt, in any other part of the world; and the reason is, that the Jesuit priests, well acquainted with human nature, make no attempt to unfold to the natives abstract doctrines beyond their comprehension, but fix their attention on a few plain truths, and make them intelligible to their minds by symbols which strike the senses. They speak little to them of grace, election, or reprobation, but much of the Good Shepherd, the tender mother, the redeeming Saviour. They uniformly begin the work of conversion by an alteration in the mode of life—they strive to lead them to religion through a change of habits, not to a change of habits through religion. The spade, the hoe, the plough, are with them the pioneers of the Cross. The symbols of Romish worship, the cross, the pontifical robes, the censers, impressed the minds of these rude tribes; they were adapted to their infant state of civilisation. The Roman Catholic worship is the transition state from heathenism to Christianity;* it arises from the efforts of men to make religious doctrines intelligible to those who are not in a condition to understand abstract truth, but perfectly accessible to the influence of the senses. Its success, therefore, in the durable conversion of rude tribes, will generally be greater than that of the Protestants, who, discarding all aid from the senses, address themselves only to the intellectual powers, and seek support chiefly from inward fervour.¹

¹ Humboldt, vi. 219, 284, 285. Malte Brun, xi. 588, 589. Hist de Peron, i. 66.

But proportioned to the success of the Jesuit missions in reclaiming a considerable part of the natives of South America from the listless indolence of savage life, and impressing upon their minds the great fundamental truths of Christianity, is the pernicious tendency which the Romish faith has had in cramping the energies

30.
Pernicious effect of the Roman Catholic religion in the towns.

* A Protestant writer need not fear being accused of prejudice in this observation. It is not of the Roman Catholic religion as it appears in the writings of Bossuet or Fenelon that it is said: but of the Romish faith as it is practically taught in all Roman Catholic countries to the working classes. It is impossible to enter one of the churches in Roman Catholic states, and witness the fervent devotion which the poor there generally evince in the exercises of religion, without perceiving both that the religion there taught savours largely of heathen imagery, and that such images have the most powerful effect upon the minds of unenlightened men.

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of men, and proclaiming impunity to their vices, in the opulent cities which had arisen on the coasts peopled with the mingled Spanish and native race. The delicious climate of South America; the facility with which wealth was acquired by slight exertion in those favoured regions; the habits of gallantry and ideas of romance, which had descended to them from their Castilian ancestors; the despotic nature of their government, which, by closing against them the path of public ambition, threw them into that of private enjoyment—all contributed to introduce a general relaxation of manners. Without having acquired the energy of the Anglo-Saxons, or the perseverance of the Dutch, they had lost the pristine vehemence of Spanish conquest. The Sybarites of the New World, the descendants of the European settlers, led in the cities an indolent life, prone to gallantry, immersed in pleasure, luxurious in habits, easy in circumstances. The delights of the theatre and the corso, the graces of the ball-room, the taste of the concert, had been transported to the American shores, but not the vigour which clears the forest, or the perseverance which irrigates the plain. To a people of such a tendency, the Romish faith proved the most pernicious form in which the blessed truths of Christianity could be conveyed; for it at once coerced thought and fostered indulgence—dispensed with self-control and promised absolution—demoralised man and debased woman.¹

¹ Hall's So. America, i. 23; ii. 261, 263. Ducon-dray Hol-stein, Vie de Bolivar, 50, 65. Introduction.

40.
State of religion and education.

Under the direction of the Jesuits, education in both sexes was generally neglected in South America, or, what was worse, directed to useless or pernicious objects. Attractive accomplishments, the guitar, the dance, the art of coquetry, and a few prescribed books of devotion, constituted the whole range of knowledge in the one sex; the mere rudiments of Spanish, a slight acquaintance with Latin, and a copious acquaintance with the voluptuous novels with which the polyglot manufactories of that species of compositions in Paris furnish all the world, comprised in general the sole information of the other. In the whole of South America, before the Revolution of 1810, there was but one printing-press, though there were abundance of schools and universities! This affords decisive evidence of the extent to which the Jesuits had succeeded in

enslaving the human mind. As a necessary consequence, the women were devout, and, in part at least, dissolute: the men infidel, in many cases profligate, always idle. As much as the Romish form of worship is calculated to impress the mass of the community and convert rude nations, is the restraint on thought which it imposes fitted to revolt the higher class of intellect, and render sceptical enlightened states. The difficulty with Protestantism is to check the growth of the mass of civilised heathenism which accumulates round its unimpressive churches—that of Romanism, to retain within the pale of Christianity the educated higher orders, who shun its gorgeous ceremonies, or dread its prostration of thought. Infidelity, in states where the former prevails, is chiefly found in the lower ranks—where the latter, in the most elevated classes.¹*

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¹ Viollet,
Hist. de Boli-
var, i. 60, 65.
Introd; and
Hall's So.
America, i.
23, 106; ii.
261, 262.

It may readily be believed that among a people who, to the pride of Castilian descent and the indolence of the Spanish hidalgo, had superadded the luxurious habits of South American opulence, industry, especially in rural districts, had made very little progress. The whole labour of the country in the agricultural districts was performed by means of slaves, or the Indians and half-castes, to whom toil was a matter of necessity. Those of the pure Castilian blood were nowhere more than a fifth of the whole inhabitants; in Mexico, where their proportion was greatest, they were in 1810, when the Revolution broke out, 1,200,000 out of 6,120,000. The mixed race, or Creoles, were somewhat above a fifth of the whole, or more numerous than the pure Spaniards; and the remaining three-fifths were Indians, by whom nearly the whole agricultural labour of the country was carried on. The Creoles were for the most part mechanics or tradesmen in the towns; the pure Spaniards, in great part at least, slumbered in the pleasures of indolence. This was the general division of the population, though with some varieties in particular districts.† The whole inhabitants of South America, including the Brazils, were in 1810, 13,600,000, and Mexico contained six millions more; so that the total population of the provinces in the New

41.
Extent and
divisions of
the popula-
tion.

* Compare France in 1789, under Romish direction in matters of religion, and England in 1843, under Protestant.

† Table exhibiting the population of Spanish America, including Mexico and

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World in which the Spanish and Portuguese race had settled, was somewhat above nineteen millions, of which number not more than three millions were of the pure Spanish race, and three millions and a half were Creoles or mixed race. This was the growth of *three* centuries, from 1519, when the Spaniards first began to settle in their territory, to 1810, when the connexion with the mother country was broken off. In North America, on the other hand, during *two* centuries—from 1642, when the Puritans first approached their shores, to 1842—the Anglo-Saxon race had exactly doubled every twenty-three years and a half; and with the aid of large and perennial accessions from the parent state, numbered in the latter period no less than seventeen millions of inhabitants, of whom fourteen millions were freemen of pure English descent.* Including the British provinces in North America, the total Anglo-Saxon population in two centuries after, deducting the French Canadians, had swelled to nearly

Brazil, in 1810 when the Revolution broke out, distinguishing the Spaniards, Creoles, and Natives :—

	Europeans.	Mixed Races.	Indians or Slaves.	Ecclesiastics.	Total.
I. Mexico, - -	1,097,928	1,338,706	3,076,281	9439	6,122,354
II. Guatimala, -	300,000	600,000	700,000	—	1,600,000
III. Cuba, - -	200,000	198,000	212,000	—	600,000
IV. Porto Rico, -	60,000	59,000	17,500	—	136,000
V. Caraccas, - -	212,000	341,000	120,000 In. 63,000 Sl.	—	785,000
VI. New Grenada, -	—	—	—	—	1,327,000
VII. Quito, - -	—	—	—	—	550,000
VIII. Chili, - -	—	—	—	—	980,000
IX. Buenos Ayres, -	—	—	—	—	5,200,000
X. Peru, - -	123,000	240,000	600,000 In. 40,000 Sl.	—	1,000,000
XI. Independent Indians,	—	—	420,000	—	420,000
Total population in the Spanish Provinces,					16,020,354
	Europeans.	Mixed Races.	Slaves.	Free Blacks.	
Brazil, - -	843,000	426,000	1,930,400	159,500	3,617,000
Total Spanish and Portuguese native race in 1810, - -					19,638,594

—HUMBOLDT, ix. 1680, 1.

† The population of the United States of North America, by the census of 1841, was as follows :—

America.				
Free American whites,	.	.	14,194,188	
Free blacks,	.	.	387,265	
Black slaves,	.	.	2,487,113	
Total Americans,	.	.	17,668,666	
British provinces, all white,	.	.		1,630,000
Add 14,194,188 Americans,				
And 1,650,000 Canadians.				
Total British race,			15,844,188	

sixteen millions! Nothing can demonstrate more clearly than this result the superior power of the Anglo-Saxon race, the reformed faith, and popular energy, in carrying on the work of colonisation, to the Castilian blood, Romish religion, and despotic institutions.

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There is, however, no unmingled good or evil in human affairs. If the vast increase and ceaseless vigour of the Anglo-Saxons in the New World give just cause for congratulation, the deplorable, and to all appearance hopeless, condition of the slaves in the southern provinces of the Union unfolds a dreadful evil, possibly destined in the end to mar its fortunes, and, within the sphere at least of their influence, overturn its institutions. On the other hand, if the indolent habits, pride of birth, and proneness to enjoyment, of the Spanish race in the southern portion of the American continent, afford less room for sanguine anticipations as to the progress and influence of the European blood, and the conversion of the wilderness into the abode of civilised man, the condition of the slaves, and of the Indian race, presents ample subject for congratulation. In the first instance, indeed, the sudden and violent translation of a large portion of the natives to forced work in the mines, accompanied as it was with an entire change of temperature and habits—from the greater part of those establishments being ten or twelve thousand feet above the sea—occasioned a prodigious mortality, which was increased by the rigour of their inexorable taskmasters, and the frequent use of ardent spirits, to which the wretched labourers had recourse to recruit their strength, or drown the recollection of their sorrows. The smallpox, and other European diseases, together with the general misery which followed the entire change of property and influence consequent on the Spanish conquest, conspired with the insatiable avarice of the first rulers of the country to produce a fearful decline in the numbers of the native inhabitants. But these evils have now in a great measure passed away. The Spaniards have since become the best slave-masters in the world; and, in their conduct towards the native race, they have exhibited a model which other nations would do well to imitate, who are louder than they in their professions of philanthropy.¹

42.
Prosperous
condition of
the slaves in
the Spanish
provinces.

¹ Malte Brun,
xi. 397, 398.
Humboldt,
Nouvelle
Espagne,
i. 361.

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43.

Mode in
which the
slaves and
natives came
to be so well
managed.

The secret of the wise and mild treatment of the slaves by the Spaniards in South America is to be found in the *gradual* relaxation of the bonds of servitude, and its conversion, in most cases, into a fixed money payment, under the influence of the policy which the priests inculcated upon the rulers of the provinces. A slave who by his industry had amassed fifteen hundred or two thousand francs, (£60 or £80,) was entitled to redeem his liberty at those sums, varying in different colonies, from his master; and the law secured to the slaves various advantages, which gave them the means of easily realising this amount. Thus slavery gradually wore out, without any loss of property to the masters, by the simple acquisition of those habits among the more industrious of the slaves which qualified them for the enjoyment of freedom. The Indians came to be subjected to no other burden than a capitation-tax, which was reduced in some provinces as low as five, and in none exceeded fifteen francs a-year. They were permitted to administer justice, by their own chiefs, to themselves, and continued subject only in general government to the Spaniards. The slaves newly made were those only who had become prisoners in the constant wars which prevailed with the independent tribes; and even they enjoyed such facilities of earning their freedom that very few of them remained in a state of servitude. The condition of such as did so was so comfortable that it might be an object of envy to an English labourer. Stripes or corporal punishment were in general unknown: living continually in family with their masters, having no wish beyond it, they resembled the old domestics, now unfortunately so rare, who were formerly to be found in almost every respectable English family. For long before the revolution, the whole persons employed in the mines had been free, and worked for daily wages; the slaves in all the states were in such inconsiderable numbers, seldom exceeding a twentieth of the people, as to excite no disquietude; and the native races were rapidly increasing in numbers, and repairing the losses they had sustained in the first years of European conquest. The contrast which such a state of things exhibited to the increasing number and hopeless degradation of the slaves in the republican states of North

America is very striking, but it is easily accounted for. The management of the slaves in South America was directed by the government and priests, who were not slaveholders; in North America, by the universal suffrage of the white population, who were. Men can easily be just in disposing of the property of others, rarely in directing their own. Had the slaves in the British colonies belonged to the House of Commons, or to the constituencies who returned its members, emancipation would never have taken place.¹

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¹ Malte Brun, xi. 400, 415.
Humboldt, Nouvelle Espagne, i. 413, 417.
Vie de Bolivar, 55, 64, Introd. Azara, 74.

The most important portion of the population of Spanish America, in a military point of view, are the Gauchos, or inhabitants of the Pampas. This numerous and energetic race, who have spread in the boundless savannahs of the New World with the herds and horses which were introduced by the Spaniards, have the same roaming propensity and enterprising spirit which every where form the characteristics of the pastoral race; but in many respects they differ essentially from all the other pastoral nations of the earth. The shepherds never accompany their flocks: they merely collect them once a-week to see that none have strayed; and during the intervening time the herds wander at will over the *estancia*, or farm, which is usually forty or fifty square miles in extent. The rest of their time is spent in riding or breaking horses, or in slothful indolence, sleeping like hounds when the chase is over in their rude cabins. The Arabs even do not excel them in horsemanship. Constantly mounted from their earliest years, riding is their only amusement, and almost sole occupation; they never go any distance on foot; and by constant exercise they acquire such skill in the art, that the most furious wild horse is unable to shake their steady seat. The weekly gathering of the herds is made at full gallop; for, from the extent of the pastures, the cattle are nearly as wild, and fully as swift, as the horses which bear the shepherds.^{2*}

44.

Manners of the Gauchos, or the pastoral natives.

² Azara, 64, 78. Hall's So. America, i. 145, 147.

* The manner in which they are hunted and caught is peculiar to South America, and highly characteristic of its pastoral inhabitants. The shepherds, mounted on their swiftest steeds, pursue the cattle at full gallop, each armed with a *lasso*, or rope, with a noose at the end of it, a spear and knife. With incredible dexterity this noose is thrown so as to catch, often at the distance of fifty yards, the horns or one of the hind feet of the flying animal, by which means he is entangled, and immediately pierced with the spear, generally thrown from a distance. They fish on horseback, carry water from the well on horseback, and even attend mass on horseback, remaining at the church

Extraordinary skill in the use of the *lasso*.

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45.
Prodigious
numbers of
cattle and
horses in
these plains.

So favourable have the pastures of the New World proved to the multiplication of the horses and cattle which were introduced by the Spaniards on their first arrival in the country, that the number of both is now immense, and is advancing at a rate so prodigious that there seems no limit whatever to their increase. Such is their quantity, when compared with the inconsiderable demand for animal food, that, except in the immediate neighbourhood of large towns, the carcass of the animal is of no sort of value, and is allowed to lie on the spot where it was killed, like common carrion, after the skin has been taken off. The number both of horses and cattle which run wild in the Pampas is beyond all calculation; but those which are within known limits, and form private property, may be guessed at, and will give an idea of the much greater number which lie beyond in the unexplored Llanos. Between the mouth of the Orinoco and the Lake Maracaybo alone, which constitutes but a small part of the Pampas, there were in 1810, 1,200,000 head of cattle, 180,000 horses, and 90,000 mules, which were numbered, and belonged to different proprietors. It may assist the imagination in conceiving such multitudes, to say that the number of horses is just the same as that which Napoleon took with him in his expedition into Russia.¹

¹ Humboldt, vi. 98, 101.
Azara, i. 30.

46.
Their prodigious multiplication in the Pampas of Buenos Ayres.

In the Pampas of Buenos Ayres there are 12,000,000 horned cattle, besides 3,000,000 horses—a number of both twice as great as are to be found in the whole kingdom of France.* These numbers are those only which belong to individual proprietors; the multitudes which over-

door seated on their steeds, while the ceremony is going forward. Rude in their manners, illiterate in their ideas, filthy in their habits and persons, they are so habituated to the slaughtering of cattle, which is their chief amusement, that they have acquired an extraordinary degree of ferocity of character. Passionate and revengeful, they are alike incapable of control by others as by themselves; they shed blood without scruple on the slightest provocation, and, bound by no ties of gratitude or necessity to their masters, are ever ready to fly to the desert, and, carrying with them a few horses and cattle, are soon beyond the reach of pursuit, and commence amidst its deep solitudes the roving life of independence.²

² Azara, 78, 128. Hall's So. America, i. 147, 149.

* In France there are 6,000,000 horned cattle, of which 3,500,000 are oxen labouring the soil. In the Austrian monarchy there are 13,400,000 horned cattle. The number of horses which are rated to the horse-tax in Great Britain is 306,000, but that number is certainly within the truth, and is exclusive of the horses employed in agriculture, which are probably nearly as many more.—See PEUCHET, *Statistique de la France*, 274; HUMBOLDT, vi. 96, 97; DEPONS, *Voyage à la Terre Ferme*, i. 10; AZARA, *Voyages au Paraguay*, i. 30; LICHTENSTEIN, *Statistiques d'Autriche*, 160; and PORTER'S *Parl. Tables*, ii. 40.

spread the Pampas in a wild state exceed any calculation that can be made. Many individual proprietors in the Llanos are possessed of 13,000 or 14,000 head of cattle, of which they sell one-half annually; but, in fact, the number they own is so great, and the bounds over which they wander so immense, that they neither know the one nor the other with any thing approaching to accuracy. The increase of these animals is the most extraordinary instance of multiplication which is recorded in the annals of mankind; for they have not yet been three centuries there, having been first introduced in the year 1548, by Christoval Rodriguez, a native of Spain.¹

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¹ Humboldt, vi. 98, 101. Pedro Simon Caf. 14. Depons, Voyage à la Terre Ferme, i. 10. Azara, i. 30.

The MINES of Mexico and Peru, which have acquired such celebrity all over the world, and, by the alteration they made in the value of the precious metals, have effected so many important monetary and social changes in European society, have been affected in the most extraordinary degree by the revolution. The most celebrated of these are the far-famed silver mines of Potosi in the Andes, which were discovered in 1545, and which have proved so productive that, from that period down to 1803, they had produced silver to the enormous amount of 5,750,000,000 francs, or £230,000,000 sterling. They were more productive, however, at first than at the beginning of the nineteenth century; but this was more than compensated by the riches extracted from other mines, especially in Mexico; so that the sum total of the precious metals imported from the New World prior to the South American revolution, was constantly increasing. The city of Potosi, elevated fourteen thousand feet above the sea in the mountains of Peru, received such an influx of workmen from these mines in its neighbourhood, that it contained, when the Revolution broke out, no less than a hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants. The mines of gold and silver in Mexico were twice as productive as those of Peru and Buenos Ayres; and the quantity of the precious metals raised from the different mining establishments in the Cordilleras, in Mexico, and throughout South America, was so prodigious, that in less than three centuries, from 1545 to 1810, it amounted to the sum total of 5,766,700,000

47.
Mining establishments in the mountains.

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Spanish piastres, or £1,426,200,000 sterling.* It may assist the imagination in conceiving the real amount of this sum to say, that the silver alone of which it was composed would have formed a solid ball eighty-five feet in diameter. The effect of this vast influx of the precious metals was to occasion a progressive and constant fall in the value of money, and rise in the money price of all other articles, over all the world. And though this change bore hard on the holders of annuities, bonds, and other money payments, yet it contributed so much to ameliorate the condition of the greatly more numerous class who live by buying and selling, and who consequently were enriched by a rise in the money price of the commodities in which they dealt, that it may be considered as one of the principal causes of the prosperity of modern Europe.¹

¹ Humboldt's
Nouvelle
Espagne, iii.
361, 413, 418.

48.
Steady in-
crease in the
supply of the
precious
metals for a
century be-
fore the Re-
volution.

² Wealth of
Nations, ii.
70.

Not only was the total amount of the precious metals raised from the mines of America so considerable, but it had, for a hundred and thirty years before the Revolution broke out in the Spanish colonies, been, with the exception of one short period, constantly increasing. From 1695 to 1803, the annual produce of the Mexican mines had multiplied nearly *five-fold*.† Adam Smith calculated the annual receipt of coin and bullion by Spain and Portugal in 1775, when he wrote the *Wealth of Nations*, at £6,000,000 annually;² but it is now ascertained, by official documents, that this sum was too small by two-fifths, and that the real amount was about £8,500,000. It afterwards increased steadily, as the demand for gold and silver to meet the necessities of the European war augmented; and in 1803 it had reached the amount of 43,500,000

* The proportion was:—

	Piastres.		Pounds sterling.
Gold,	1,348,500,000	or	£337,150,000
Silver,	4,358,200,000	or	1,089,050,000
	5,706,700,000		£1,426,200,000

—HUMBOLDT, *Nouvelle Espagne*, iii. 418.

† Average annual produce of the mines of Mexico in gold and silver:—

	Spanish piastres.		
1690—1720,	5,458,830	or	£1,352,405
1721—1743,	9,177,768	..	2,294,442
1744—1770,	11,854,825	..	2,963,958
1771—1782,	17,223,916	..	4,304,434
1783—1790,	19,517,081	..	4,877,700
1791—1803,	22,325,824	..	5,581,431

—HUMBOLDT'S *Nouvelle Espagne*, iii. 306.

Spanish piastres, or £10,000,000 annually, of which £9,000,000 came from the Spanish colonies. The rapid rise in the money price of all articles which took place in Great Britain, and indeed all over Europe, during the war, is in part to be ascribed to this cause.* The incalculable importance of any variation in the supply of the precious metals from the New World, upon the operations of commerce in every civilised nation, and through these, in an especial manner, on the social and political state of Great Britain, will not be duly appreciated, unless it is at the same time kept in mind, that the supplies of gold and silver obtained from America are so immense, as compared with all that can be got from Europe and Asia, that in the beginning of the nineteenth century, they constituted above nine-tenths of the whole supply of the globe.[†]

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¹ Humboldt's
Nouv. Esp.
iii. 396, 401.

The government in all these provinces, anterior to the revolution, was the same. It consisted of a governor or viceroy, aided by a council, who conducted the administration in the name of the King of Spain, and whose powers were nearly as great as those of the Spanish monarch in the mother country. He was responsible to the king alone: and it may readily be believed that on a man of any address, such a distant appeal, in a despotic state, was not likely to impose any real or efficacious check. To assist him in the discharge of his numerous and onerous duties, he was assisted by a great council, styled the Real Audiencia, which disposed of all

49.
System of
government
in the Spanish
colonies.

* Value of gold and silver obtained from the American mines in 1805:—

	Piastres.	
Mexico,	22,000,000	or £5,500,000
Peru,	5,240,000	.. 1,310,000
Chili,	2,060,000	.. 515,000
Buenos Ayres, (Potosi)	4,850,000	.. 1,215,000
New Grenada,	2,990,000	.. 742,500
Brazil,	4,360,000	.. 1,090,000
	41,500,000	£10,372,500

—HUMBOLDT'S *Nouvelle Espagne*, iii. 398.

† Table showing the annual produce of the mines of gold and silver in Europe, Asia, and America, in the year 1809:—

	Gold in francs.	Silver in francs.	Total in francs.	In L. sterling.
Europe,	4,467,444	11,704,444	16,171,888	640,000
Northern Asia,	1,855,111	4,824,122	6,677,333	261,000
America,	59,557,889	176,795,778	236,333,667	9,841,000
	65,878,444	193,324,444	259,202,888	10,742,000

—HUMBOLDT, *Nouvelle Espagne*, iii. 400.

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civil affairs. The ecclesiastics had a separate tribunal, composed entirely of churchmen, over which the authority of the captain-general did not extend. The viceroys in general held office for five or six years, like the governor-general of India, during which period they generally enjoyed the opportunity, by legitimate means, of amassing a considerable fortune. There were six of those viceroys in these magnificent domains; one in Venezuela, who from the capital of the Caraccas ruled eight provinces: one in New Grenada, who governed twenty-two: one at Panama, who governed two: one at Santa Fé de Bogota, who directed twelve: one at Quito, who ruled nine; one at Mexico, who governed fifteen. The laws, institutions, and system of government in these different provinces, were frequently as dissimilar to each other as in different kingdoms of the German Empire; and equally vexatious restraints fettered commerce and impeded travelling in passing from one vicerealty to another, as in crossing the frontiers of independent European kingdoms.¹

¹ Vie de Bolivar, i. 9, 10. Introduc. Malte Brun, xi. 473, 482.

50.
Oppressive restrictions to which the colonies were subjected.

The rule of the Spaniards in their American dominions, as all the world knows, was in some respects overrun with abuses; the natural result of the selfishness of human nature, acting in a sphere where cupidity was unrestrained, and rapacity unbounded. The *meta* or compulsory toil exacted from the natives of each district, for the space of a year, either in the mines or in agriculture, fell with peculiar severity upon that unhappy race; as, although the person on whom the lot fell received wages, which in the mines was two shillings a-day, yet they were unaccustomed to toil, and indifferent to the artificial wants which alone to civilised man render it tolerable. Twelve thousand Indians were annually subjected to this burden in the province of Potosi alone; and such was the effect of the severe labour in the mines on the native constitutions, that it was computed that 8,285,000 Indians had perished in those of Peru, from their discovery to the year 1800. The *repartimiento* or privilege, granted, at first with the best intentions, to the corregidores or superintendents of districts, to furnish articles of necessary consumption to the Indians, had come to be perverted into a gross abuse, and become a lucrative monopoly to the

persons in power, of which they availed themselves to force worthless commodities, at an exorbitant price, on reluctant purchasers. The capitation-tax, though generally light, sometimes was made the groundwork of cruel oppression in the *obraje* or public bridewells, if remaining unpaid. The parish priests exacted enormous fees from their parishioners, insomuch that some livings in Peru were worth ten thousand dollars a-year, which incomes were, however, generally spent in the noblest manner. These abuses produced several dreadful rebellions among the natives, in one of which, in 1780, in revenge for the inhuman barbarities exercised by the Spaniards on a chief, Tupac Amaru,* they stormed the city of Sorata, and put every soul in it, twenty thousand in number, save a few priests, to the sword.¹

¹ Don Tor-
quez Juan
and Antonio
de Ulloa,
translated by
Barry, i. 162,
289.

The principles of a benignant paternal government breathed through every page of the fundamental laws of the Spanish colonies; and if it had been found practicable to execute them in the spirit in which they were conceived, they would have formed a code of colonial law superior to that ever adopted by any free state upon earth.† But, unfortunately, the kings of Spain delegated their powers to a supreme council, called the "Council of the Indies," which came to monopolise the whole government of the colonies, and rendered it little better than a means of aggrandising and enriching a limited class of society in the mother country. To favour the monopolies established in favour of the dominant race, numerous restrictions on industry, both commercial and agricultural, were established, which at length fettered the colonies to an extent which was in the highest degree vexatious. Commercial intercourse was stopped between the different viceroalties;²‡ the manufacture of any sort of cloth finer than what the Indians required was forbidden, as well as the cultivation of many of the plants and trees

51.
Admirable
principles,
but abuses in
practice, of
the Spanish
colonial
government.

² Humboldt,
Nouv. Esp.
iv. 116, 137.
Miller, i. 16,
24. Robert-
son's
America.
Hall's So.
America, ii.
111.

* Tupac Amaru beheld from the scaffold the execution of his wife, his children, and many of his faithful followers; after which his tongue was cut out, and he was torn in pieces by wild horses.—MILLER, *Memoir*, i. 17. The Indians retaliated, on the capture of Sorata, by barbarities yet more terrible and five hundred times as numerous.

† See *Recapitulacion de las Leyes de las Indias*. Madrid, 1781.

‡ "Per ultima resolucion del Conde de Chinchon y acuerdo de la hacienda, ordenamos y mandamos a los vireyes del Peru y Nueva España que infaliblemente prohiban y estorban el comercio y trafico entre ambos regnos, per todos los caminos y medios que les fueran posibles."—*Leyes*, 79, tit. 55, l. 9.

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best adapted for the climate, particularly vines, olives, and almonds: * trade with strangers was generally prohibited, or subjected to such restraints as practically led to that result: the cod and whale fisheries on the coasts were forbidden, lest the colonies should acquire an independent marine, though these fisheries were open to foreigners; the gold and silver mines were constituted a royal monopoly, and all working of the mines of quick-silver and iron was absolutely prohibited.

52.
Monopolising
spirit of the
Spanish
government.

By law, the native Spaniards of America were eligible to all offices, civil and military; but so rigidly was the principle of exclusion practised by the supreme council of the Indies, that this privilege was little more than nominal. Out of six hundred and two captains-general and governors, all except fourteen had been Old Spaniards: and of five hundred and fifty ecclesiastics advanced to the episcopal dignity in America, only fifty-five were born in the colonies. Anxiously as the Spanish policy was directed to the securing all the benefits of colonial intercourse to the mother country, it was not guided even with that view by any enlarged spirit. The haughty and indolent hidalgos of Spain, disdaining industry or commercial pursuits, could not afford a sufficient market to colonial industry, any more than they could furnish them with an adequate infusion of European vigour; the encouragement of both was cramped by being confined to each other; and the American commerce, which might, if met by corresponding efforts at home, and equally diffused, have sustained and vivified the whole monarchy, confined to the harbours of Cadiz and Corunna, produced only a partial, and, as regarded those excluded from it, an invidious accumulation of wealth. In a word, the practical government of Spain towards the colonies was characterised by that monopolising spirit which is universal among mankind, joined to that narrow concentration of its advantages which is peculiar to countries of despotic or aristocratic institutions.¹

¹ Humboldt, *Nouv. Esp.* iv. 120, 154. Miller's *Memoirs*, i. 17, 24. Leyes, 3, 5, 13, 14, 22, 24, 28.

Notwithstanding these restrictions, however, the native capabilities of South America, both as regarded agricultural

* "Quedando expresamente prohibido per la Nueva España, Tierra Firme, y Santa Fe, los vinos, aguardientes, vinagre, y aceyte de olivas, pasas y almendras del Peru y Chili, y privados rigurosamente en todas partes los plantios de olivas y vides."—*Gazeta de Mexico*, Oct. 6, 1804.

and mineral productions, and those arising from the increase of the population, which doubled once in forty-five years, were such, that the trade carried on between them and the mother country was immense. It amounted, when the revolution broke out, to the enormous sum of 59,500,000 piastres, or £15,000,000 sterling, of imports from Europe; and 30,000,000 piastres, or £7,500,000 of exports in agricultural produce; besides 38,500,000 piastres, or £9,600,000, remitted in the precious metals to Spain.* This comprehended the contraband as well as the regular trade, in the former of which Great Britain had the principal share; but at least three-fourths of this traffic was conducted in the regular channels, and flowed into the Spanish peninsula. The magnitude of this trade may be judged of by the fact, that the whole exports of Great Britain to all her colonies in every part of the globe put together, now only amount to £16,231,000. If the trade to the Philippines and Canaries be added, the total exports to the Spanish colonies in 1809, was £16,700,000, or *more than the whole exports of Great Britain to her colonies at this time*. Spain derived a gross income of 38,000,000 piastres, or £9,500,000, from her colonies, of which 30,000,000 piastres, or £7,500,000, was expended in expenses connected with the administration of the colonies themselves, and 8,000,000 piastres, or £2,000,000, remained clear to the royal treasury of Madrid. The colonial income constituted, anterior to the revolution, more than a half of the whole revenue of the monarchy.^{1†}

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53.

Great extent
of the trade
carried on
between
Spain and the
colonies.

* Table showing the Exports of Spain to her South American colonies in 1809, before the Revolution:—

	EXPORTS TO SPAIN.					
	IMPORTS FROM SPAIN.		Agricult. Produce.		Precious Metals.	
	Piastres.	L.	Piastres.	L.	Piastres.	L.
Porto Rico and Cuba, . .	11,000,000	2,750,000	9,900,000	2,250,000		
New Spain and Mexico, .	21,000,000	5,250,000	9,900,000	2,250,000	23,500,000	5,650,000
New Grenada,	5,700,000	1,450,000	2,000,000	500,000	3,000,000	750,000
Caracas,	8,500,000	2,150,000	4,000,000	1,000,000		
Peru and Chili,	11,500,000	2,875,000	4,000,000	1,000,000	8,000,000	2,000,000
Buenos Ayres and Potosi, .	3,500,000	875,000	2,000,000	500,000	5,000,000	1,250,000
Total,	59,200,000	15,200,000	30,000,000	7,350,000	38,500,000	9,650,000
Total Imports,	59,200,000		Piastres or L. 15,200,000			
Total Exports,		68,500,000	17,950,000			
Balance in favour of Spain, .		9,300,000	2,750,000			

—HUMBOLDT, *Essai Politique sur la Nouvelle Espagne*, iv. 153-154.

† If the trade to the Philippine Islands, and the Canaries, be taken only at £1,500,000—which it was at the very least—the exports of the mother country to the Spanish colonies were £16,700,000; or somewhat above the amount of exports

¹ Plack-
mann's State
Tables, 1839,
p. 22.

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1812.

54.

First cause of
the severance
of the colonies
from Spain.

England, aware of the vast commercial intercourse which Spain carried on with her American colonies, had long desired to effect their independence in order to share in its profits; and Mr Pitt had more than once made secret advances towards the attainment of that object. In particular, instructions were sent to Sir Thomas Picton, the governor of Trinidad, in 1797, to tender assistance to the inhabitants of the neighbouring territory of Venezuela, if they felt disposed to revolt against the authority of the mother country; and a negotiation took place with General Miranda, an officer of talent and enterprise, in the West Indies, in 1806, with a view to the same design. But these projects came to nothing, from the absorption of the whole attention of Great Britain in the war with France. Discontent widely prevailed, especially in consequence of the monopoly of the trade by the merchants of Cadiz, but no event had occurred which fanned the smothered embers into a flame; and the inhabitants of the New World, naturally indolent, slumbered on under a government which they disliked, but which they had not energy to attempt to subvert. The unfortunate result of the expedition to Buenos Ayres in 1807, and the enthusiasm which the defeat of the British there justly produced throughout the whole Spanish Main, contributed still farther to impede any attempt on the part of the South Americans to achieve their independence by English aid, and would probably have postponed the revolution to an indefinite period, had not matters been brought to a crisis, and a sudden change been wrought on their destinies, by the attack of Napoleon on Spain, which was fraught with such momentous results to continental Europe.¹

That iniquitous act of aggression was chiefly suggested by the anxious desire which the French Emperor felt to gain possession of the treasures of Mexico and Peru, and

of Great Britain to her colonies at this time, which are £16,231,000. The revenue drawn from the Spanish colonies in 1807, was as follows:—

	Piastres.	£.
Spanish European Revenue,	35,000,000	8,750,000
Colonial Revenue,	38,000,000	9,500,000
Colonial Revenue,	38,000,000	9,500,000
Colonial Expenditure,	30,000,000	7,500,000

Clear Revenue of Spain from the Colonies, 8,000,000 2,000,000

—HUMBOLDT, *ut supra*, iv. 251, 252.

¹ Ducondray
Holstein, Vie
de Bolivar,
i. 34. Ann.
Reg. 1810,
223. Robin-
son's Life of
Picton, 1.

maintain his colossal European army by the produce of the South American mines. No sooner, accordingly, had he succeeded in his hypocritical designs at Bayonne, than he despatched the brig *Serpent* from that place, with secret instructions for the captain-general of the Caraccas. The *Serpent* was chased by the English frigate *Acasta*, and although the Frenchman arrived first at Caraccas yet Captain Beaver of the *Acasta* contrived to inform the inhabitants of the real character of the events at Bayonne. Such was the universal indignation produced by this intelligence, that Ferdinand VII. was unanimously and enthusiastically proclaimed, the English officer and crew were received with transport, and the French captain was obliged to fly for his life, and escape on board his vessel during the obscurity of night. Iluorigaray, governor of Mexico, in like manner spurned all the offers of Napoleon to continue him in office, and proclaimed Ferdinand VII. amidst the acclamations of the inhabitants. But although Napoleon was thus utterly foiled in his attempt to get possession of South America, yet the events which followed in the Peninsula not the less certainly produced a virtual separation of the colonies from the mother country. During the mortal struggle in Europe, the government of Spain was able to do nothing to support its authority in the New World. Juntas were formed at Caraccas, Mexico, Buenos Ayres, and other places, in imitation of those in Spain, which practically assumed the direction of affairs; and although the Spanish governors were still obeyed, and the people were unanimous in their detestation of the French usurpation, yet they were in fact becoming habituated to self-government; and the conviction was daily spreading among all classes, that the connexion with Old Spain, amidst the disasters with which it was overwhelmed, could not much longer be maintained.¹

The invasion of Andalusia by the French in February 1810, and the flight of the Junta of Seville to Cadiz, which has already been mentioned,* brought matters to a crisis. The whole country, with the exception of the Isle of Leon, being now to all appearance overrun by the enemy, the rightful monarch in captivity, and the

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1808.

55.

General determination not to submit to the government of France.
July 19, 1808.

Aug. 5.

1 Ann. Reg.
1810. 223,
225. Ducon-
dray Hol-
stein, Vie de
Bolivar. i. 17,
28. Miller's
Mem. i. 32,
33.

56.

Causes which led to the revolt against the Spanish government.

* *Ante*, Chap. lxiil. § 46.

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LXVII.

1810.

April 19,
1810.

¹ Toreno, iii.
404. Ducon-
dray Hol-
stein, Vie de
Bolivar, i. 47,
56. Ann.
Reg. 1810.
224, 227.

57.
The revolution
spreads
and becomes
universal.

July 8, 1810.

government in Cadiz entirely in the hands of a junta elected for the most part by the population of that city, the inhabitants of the Spanish colonies reasonably concluded that their connexion with Old Spain was virtually dissolved by the dissolution of its legitimate authority, and the dethronement of the only sovereign to whom they owed allegiance. As, therefore, submission to the usurpation of France was out of the question, it was generally felt that no alternative remained but to declare themselves independent; and so naturally did this idea arise from the circumstances in which they were placed, that the step was taken nearly simultaneously in many provinces, without co-operation, and with neither dissension nor bloodshed. On the 19th of April 1810, the provinces of Caraccas, Cumana, Barinas, Margarita, Barcelona, Merida, and Truxillo, declared themselves united in a federative government, under the name of the American Confederation of Venezuela. They did not as yet, however, openly throw off the authority of the Spanish monarch, nor declare themselves independent; but, professing to administer the public affairs in his name, declared their unshaken loyalty to his person, and their determination not to submit to the invasion which had deprived him of his European dominions.¹

The measures of the popular leaders, however, soon showed that, though not designing to act with disloyalty towards Ferdinand, they were not disposed to submit to the dictation of the Junta of Cadiz, elected by the very merchants whose monopoly had so long fettered their industry. On the very day on which the confederation was proclaimed, Sillas, their chief, compelled the governor-general, Emparan, to arrest D'Anca, the most powerful and able member of the Spanish council—a demand to which he was obliged to submit. Encouraged by this success, the popular chiefs required the arrest of other Spanish councillors, which was also complied with, and the remainder, seeing their power at an end, sent in their resignations. The *Audiencia Real*, the symbol of Spanish power in Venezuela, was supplanted by the popular junta, the organ of local self-government; and immediately after, the latter body gave decisive proof of its disposition to emancipate South America from the trammels of

the Cadiz merchants, by passing a decree pronouncing the Indians liberated from their capitation tax, declaring commerce free, and sending the Spanish governor and councillors by sea to the United States of North America. Buenos Ayres, Guayaquil, and several other provinces of the Spanish colonies, soon after followed the example of Caraccas, and juntas were established in them, all conducting government in the name of Ferdinand VII., and professing the utmost loyalty to him and the royal family, and even a lively wish to assist the mother country in its contest with France, but showing no disposition to submit to the regency, or the junta at Cadiz.¹

The American colonies, however, were far too important a jewel in the Spanish crown, to be surrendered by the government at Cadiz without a struggle; and as the produce of the gold and silver mines in those distant possessions constituted almost the whole revenue which remained to the government, it became a matter of necessity to endeavour to effect the subjugation of the insurgent provinces. Unbounded was the indignation excited at Cadiz when intelligence of these untoward events reached that city. It far exceeded the hostility felt against the French. The South Americans had so long submitted without an audible murmur to their dominion, that it was never conceived possible they could shake off the yoke; the Cadiz merchants felt as if their own slaves had revolted against them. It was not a national but a private quarrel. Violent decrees were fulminated against the insurgent provinces, which were declared in a state of blockade; and every effort was made, by private intrigue and public denunciation, to get them to return to their duty. These produced, however, no other effect but that of inducing Guayaquil, which in the first instance had joined the Confederation of Venezuela, to resume its allegiance to the government in Europe. But still the royalist party was very strong in the colonies, and every thing presaged a bloody civil war, ere the contest should be decided in favour of either of the contending parties. Porto-Rico, Mexico, Cuba, Spanish Guiana, Monte Video, and Peru, adhered to the regency at Cadiz, and sent powerful subsidies from the mines to carry on the contest with France; and the continued existence

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1810.

¹ Ducon-
dray Hol-
stein, *Vie de*
Bolívar, i.
52, 59. Ann.
Reg. 1810,
227. Miller's
Mem. i. 37,
46. Toreno,
iii. 405, 407.

58.
Establish-
ment of a
monarchical
government
in Brazil,
and com-
mencement
of the revolu-
tionary war.

Sept. 6. 1810.

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LXVII.

1810.

of a monarchical government in Brazil, from whence an army of observation ten thousand strong was despatched to the frontiers of Buenos Ayres, proved a strong support to the numerous adherents of Spain in the colonies. But with these exceptions, the whole country was arrayed from the very outset on the side of independence. The maritime and commercial provinces of Venezuela, Quito, and Buenos Ayres, were enthusiastic in the cause; and the whole Gauchos of the Pampas, ardent for freedom, promised them the aid of their incomparable cavalry. Meanwhile the government of Great Britain, though urgently solicited by the insurgent colonies to declare in their favour, albeit not insensible to the commercial advantages which they might derive from such a step, adhered with scrupulous good faith to their treaties with the regency at Cadiz, and declined giving the slightest countenance to any step which might tend to a dismemberment of the Spanish monarchy.¹*

¹ Ann. Reg.
227, 231.
Ducondray
Holstein, i.
57, 62. Tor-
reno, iii. 412,
413.

59.
Final breach
of the colo-
nies with
Spain.
Aug. 2, 1811.

Sept. 18,
1810.

July 5, 1811.

During the remainder of 1810 and the whole of 1811, the cause of the insurgents made great progress. Although the Junta of Quito was dissolved, and its leaders, to the number of three hundred, were barbarously put to death by the Spanish viceroys of Santa Fe de Bogota and Peru, who united their forces against that province, yet in other quarters the cause of the revolution was triumphant. The insurgents of Buenos Ayres repulsed the governor of Cordova, who, at the head of a body of royal troops tried to reduce that city; Chili followed the example of Caraccas and Buenos Ayres; Mexico soon after hoisted the standard of revolt; and on the 5th July 1811, Venezuela solemnly proclaimed its independence, and was speedily followed by Mexico, Carthagena, Socorro, and the principal places in New Grenada, and after a short

* "It was the first object of his Majesty, on being acquainted with the revolution in Spain, to second the efforts of so brave and loyal a people, for maintaining the independence of the Spanish monarchy in all parts of the world. In conformity to these sentiments and the obligations of justice and good faith, his Majesty must discourage every step tending to separate the Spanish provinces in America from the mother country in Europe. If, however, contrary to his Majesty's wishes and expectations, the Spanish states in Europe should be condemned to submit to the yoke of the common enemy, whether by real compulsion or a convention which left them only the shadow of independence, his Majesty, on the same principles, would think it his duty to render every kind of assistance to the provinces of America which should render them independent of French Spain."—LORD LIVERPOOL to the Governor of Curaçoa, June 29, 1810. *Ann. Reg. for 1810*, p. 230, 231.

delay by Buenos Ayres. England endeavoured to mediate between the regency at Cadiz and the revolted colonies, and on the 2d October formally presented a complete plan of pacification and reconciliation with Old Spain, by means of Admiral Cockburn, who commanded the naval forces of Great Britain on the coast of Venezuela. But the passions were on both sides now so warmly excited, and the interests at issue were so important, that her mediation, though accepted by the regency, was rejected by the colonies, and from that moment all hope of accommodation was at an end.¹

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LXVII.

1811.
Oct. 2, 1811.

¹ Ducondray
Holstein, i.
63, 70. Hist.
de la Rev.
d'Espagne en
1820, 74, 80.

The insurrection spread from province to province, from city to city; the insurgents were frequently defeated in their enterprises, but their expeditions seldom failed to rouse one part of the population against the other, and leave the seeds of civil war in the districts which they had visited; and from the very outset, the contest was conducted on both sides with that atrocious and cold-blooded cruelty which in every age has formed the disgraceful characteristic of Spanish history. Potosi revolted, and the Spanish authorities were shot by the population; an expedition from Buenos Ayres into Paraguay was defeated after three bloody actions, but left the seeds of insurrection in its forests; the patriots in Mexico were worsted with dreadful loss in two battles, and the insurrection was nearly suppressed in that province; but, on the other hand, Elio was shut up with his royalist garrison in Monte Video; the Indians in Peru rose in arms, and gave ample employment to the Spanish royalists in that province, who nevertheless maintained their superiority. Bloodshed, conflagration, pillage, and massacre, became universal; the "bellum plusquam civile," so well known and dreaded in antiquity, was experienced in all its horrors; and mutual slaughter and reprisal soon brought the contest to the atrocious usages of England during the wars of the Roses, and of Spain in the frightful contest between the Christinos and Carlists in after times.²

60.
General
spread of the
insurrection.

Nov. 7.

Jan. 17.

² Hist. de la
Revolution
d'Espagne de
1820, 74, 80.
Ann. R. & C.
1811, 158,
164. Ducon-
dray Hol-
stein, i. 63,
72.

A deplorable catastrophe soon after filled Spanish America with consternation, and augmented in an unexpected manner the hopes and resources of the royalist party in the New World. At three o'clock in the afternoon on the 26th March 1812, the city of Caraccas was

61.
Earthquake
at Caraccas.

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LXVII.

1812.

visited by a frightful earthquake, which threw down the chief buildings it contained, and destroyed above six thousand of its inhabitants. La Guayra, and several other towns in the province, shared in the same calamity. Its horrors were fearfully augmented by the catastrophe happening on Holy Thursday, at the very time when the churches were crowded; most of which fell, burying all within them in ruins. The scene which ensued was beyond measure frightful. In less than three minutes a third of the town had fallen, and what remained was rendered uninhabitable. Hundreds of mutilated remains were immediately seen crushed beneath the falling masses: while heads, projected out in every direction, prayed for aid from their fellow citizens, who, instead of affording them any, threw themselves with loud lamentations on their faces, imploring protection from their patron saints. In five minutes not a soul was left in the houses, and the panic-struck mass was all prostrate on their faces on the ground, or flying into the fields in the neighbourhood. There, however, new objects of terror met their eyes. Huge masses of the mountains detached themselves from the summits and sides, and rolled down with a thundering crash into the valleys at their feet; deep clefts suddenly opened, disclosing frightful abysses, and sometimes after a few seconds closed again, swallowing up houses and human beings, some of whom were left with their heads and arms sticking up out of these awful graves.¹

¹ Hist. de la
Rev. d'Amer.
84, 86. Ann.
Reg. 1812,
206.

62.
Strong re-
action it
produced
against the
Revolution.

Twenty thousand persons perished altogether in this terrible convulsion. The minds of men, vehemently excited by the events of the revolution, were struck with consternation at this event, in itself so terrible as to be sufficient to have awakened terror in the strongest, or remorse in the most hardened minds. But recently emancipated from the bonds of despotic and the terrors of priestly authority, numbers who had been active in the cause of the insurrection, thought they beheld in this event the evident hand of Providence, and the just punishment of their sins in breaking off their allegiance to Old Spain. The priests and ecclesiastics, who already foresaw their own ruin, and perhaps that of Christianity itself, from the progress of the revolution, strongly incul-

cated the same ideas ; and such was the effect produced, that a general reaction in favour of the old government ensued. General Monte Verde, who commanded the royalist forces at Cora, took advantage of the discouragement of the insurgents to move against the Caraccas, and with such success, that after several lesser acquisitions, the capital itself capitulated, and three days after, its harbour, La Guayra. Miranda, whom the republicans had created dictator in this emergency, was made prisoner, in defiance of an amnesty proclaimed by the royalists, and the whole province of Venezuela submitted to the arms of Spain.¹

But terror is all powerful with men only while it continues ; the recollection of the most dreadful disasters is ere long lost in the presence of succeeding interests, or the craving of daily wants. The Spaniards made a cruel use of their victory : the prisons soon overflowed ; private houses were converted into temporary places of detention ; the amnesty solemnly proclaimed was violated. The baseness of denunciation appeared in the royalist ranks ; and blood, after the contest was over, flowed in frightful streams on the scaffold. In this extremity a second rebellion broke out, more formidable than the former, for it was founded on despair, and stimulated by revenge. A hero arose whose name is indissolubly connected with the cause of South American independence. BOLIVAR,* who had retreated from La Guayra to New Grenada, which still continued the contest, soon appeared on the plains of Venezuela at the head of six thousand men,

CHAP.
LXVII.
1813.

July 28.
July 31.
¹ Ann. Reg.
1812, 205,
209, and
Chron. 39.
40. Hist. de
la Revolution
en Amerique,
85, 87.

63.
Sketch of the
war which
terminated in
the independ-
ence of
Columbia.

* Don Simon Bolivar was born at Caraccas on the 24th July 1783, of a noble family. The youngest of four children, who were left orphans in 1789, having lost both their father and mother, his education was at first much neglected ; but being endowed by nature with an ardent and ambitious disposition, he redeemed the time he had lost at the age of fourteen, when sent to an uncle at Madrid, and engaged with ardour in the study of literature and the exact sciences. At eighteen he fell in love with his cousin, Donna Theresa, whom he married, in spite of the remonstrances of his relations, but whom he had the misfortune to lose five months after their nuptials. Though suffering severely at this bereavement, he yet did not sink under his grief, but resumed with ardour his philosophical studies. His ardent and vehement temperament, however, impelled him ere long into the more attractive career of earthly ambition ; he devoured the histories of the French Revolution, dreamed of Washington and Franklin, and, repairing to Paris in 1804, drank in deep draughts of ambition on beholding the crowning of Napoleon in 1804, and the placing the iron crown on his brow the following year in the cathedral of Milan. The freedom and republican character of his language in reference to these events, attracted the notice of the police, and he only escaped imprisonment by the aid of powerful friends, who screened him from the myrmidons of Fouché. Escaped from these perils, he surrendered himself to the pleasures of Paris ; and after travelling in Germany, where he

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LXVII.

1813.

June 6, 1813.

Aug. 4, 1813.

¹ Ducongray

Holstein,

i. 81, 140.

Hist. de la

Rev. d'Amer.

89, 90.

composed partly of volunteers from New Grenada, partly of fugitives from Caraccas and La Guayra, whom the cruelties of the Spaniards had driven to despair. Disregarding the defeat of a large body of auxiliary horse, whom the royalists routed, the Independent general advanced rapidly towards the capital, defeated Monte Verde at Cacuta, and entered Caraccas in triumph on the 4th August 1813, making fifteen hundred Spanish troops prisoners.¹

64.
First success
of Bolivar,
and his
cruelty.

The joy of the inhabitants at this deliverance made them forget for a time the horrors of the earthquake; the prisons were opened, the royalists banished, their property confiscated, and the army recruited by a large body of needy republicans, whom the revolutionary troubles had deprived of bread, or victorious cruelty had inspired with the thirst for vengeance. Bolivar, finding he could not prevail on Monte Verde to consent to an exchange of prisoners, took a frightful revenge by murdering his captives in cold blood. The war continued for some years after with various success in Venezuela—for Monte Verde retained his footing in the interior of the country—and with an incredible amount of cruelty inflicted and suffering borne by both the contending parties. But the authority of the Independents in that province was never again destroyed, and Bolivar, who after his glorious success had the magnanimity to lay down the dictatorship with which the necessities of his countrymen had invested him, was obliged to resume it again from their gratitude.²

² Hist. de la
Révolution,
89, 90. Du-
congray Hol-
stein, i. 81,
166.

made the acquaintance of the illustrious Humboldt, he returned to Spain, and subsequently traversed North America: and at length, returning home, resumed the indolent life of the nobles of Caraccas, till the troubles broke out in 1808. Though he was then a colonel of militia, as his father had been in Aragua, he at first took no part in the divisions which ensued, and treated the first efforts of independence, which terminated in the revolution of 19th April 1810, as a chimerical attempt. Being secretly inclined, however, to the cause of independence, and solicited by his friends to take office under the new government, he at length agreed to go to London as one of the deputies from Venezuela to the British government in 1810, when Lord Wellesley gave them the same answer as Lord Liverpool had done, and explained that England could take no part in any attempt to dismember the Spanish monarchy. In the following year, however, he embarked in the cause of the revolution with General Miranda, who was now made dictator, and fought several actions against Monte Verde; but, after the fall of Caraccas, he took part with the royalists in the arrest of the former general, which has affixed a dark stain on his memory. Subsequently, however, the cruelties and perfidy of the Spaniards again drove him to arms, and thenceforward his biography becomes the annals of the War of Independence in South America.—See *Biographie Universelle*, Sup. lviii. 497, 499.

To all appearance the Revolutionary party in Venezuela was now established on a solid foundation ; and so they might have been if they had used their victory with justice and humanity. But instead of doing this, they continued the war with a degree of barbarity exceeding any thing recorded in civilised history, and outstripping even the atrocities of the French Revolution. By a proclamation issued by the Independent government from Carthagena on the 13th January 1813, it was declared that the whole property, moveable and immoveable, of the Spanish Royalists should be confiscated, one-half to the state, one-fourth to the officers, and the other fourth to the soldiers engaged against them ; and that every soldier who presented twenty Spanish heads should be made an ensign, if thirty a lieutenant, if fifty a captain.* The barbarity of ancient warfare has no such atrocious code of military law to present : it exceeds even the usages of the Turks, for they paid for those heads only which were cut off in battle ; but the regenerators of the New World offered rewards for all Spanish heads indiscriminately, whether of soldiers or pacific citizens. Nor did these atrocious edicts remain a dead letter. On the 8th of February 1814, eight hundred and twenty-three Spaniards, in great part old men, sick, some bedridden, and many whose lives had done honour to their country, were condemned to death by Bolivar at Caraccas, and four hundred and thirty at La Guayra, for no other crime but their birth ; and on the 14th and 15th of the same month, they were all murdered on the public place of execution. Some were so old and infirm that they could not stand, and they were shot bound to chairs. Such were the auspices under which freedom arose in Spanish America.†

CHAP.
LXVII.

1815.

65.

Atrocities of
the Revolution-
arists, and
reaction in
favour of the
Spaniards.

Jan. 13, 1813.

Feb. 8. 1814.

1 Mém. de
Murillo, 510.
Hist. by
Bolívar, de la
Révolution,
91, 92. Hist.
de Bolívar,
par Ducon-
dray Hol-
stein, i. 159.

* "Comme le but principal de cette guerre est détruire à Venezuela la mau-
dite race des Espagnols, sans excepter les Canariens, pour avoir droit à une
recompense, ou à un grade, il suffira de présenter un certain nombre de têtes
d'Espagnols d'Europe, ou d'Insulaires des Canaries. Le soldat qui présentera
vingt têtes sera fait enseigne en activité ; trente têtes vaudront le grade de lieuten-
nant, cinquante celui de capitaine. Les propriétés des Espagnols d'Europe
enclavées dans le territoire délivré, seront divisées en quatre parts ; l'un pour
les officiers qui feront partie de l'expédition, et qui auront assisté à la première
affaire ; le second quart aux soldats en disfranchement ; le reste reviendra à
l'état. Les biens seront repartis sur le champ dans chaque ville où entreront
les troupes republicaines ; les meubles qui l'on ne saurait ni emporter ni separer
facilement seront vendus à l'encan."—*Proclamation, signée 16 Jan. 1813 ; ANTONIO BORIENO, Mémoires de MURILLO, v.*

† "Cette sentence fut effectivement exécutée à l'égard de 1253 Espagnols

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LXVII.

1815.

66.
Successes of
the Royalists
in Venezuela
under Mu-
rillo.

Such unheard-of atrocities had the usual effect of rendering the opposite party desperate, and rousing anew the wellnigh extinguished flame of civil war. A dreadful guerilla contest sprang up in every part of Venezuela, which involved the whole of that beautiful country in unutterable wo, and soon reduced, by two hundred thousand, the number of its inhabitants. Meanwhile the Spanish government, at length relieved from the pressure of the war with Napoleon by the peace of Paris, prepared to take decisive steps to reassert their dominion over the New World. General Murillo, the best of their commanders, trained in the school of Wellington, set sail from Cadiz in 1815 at the head of twelve thousand men, and arrived in the beginning of April at Corunna, where he joined Morales, who, at the head of a motley group of four thousand Indians, Mulattoes, and Negroes, with a few hundred Spaniards who had escaped from the massacre, still maintained the royalist standard. So great a reinforcement speedily changed the face of affairs. The Royalists immediately commenced the reorganisation of their troops, and soon after resumed the offensive. Carthagena was invested and taken after a dreadful siege of four months, in which the Republicans underwent the extremity of suffering.¹*

¹ Murillo's
Memoirs, 72,
1814. Biog.
Univ. lviil.
510, 512.
Bolívar.

67.
Noble
clemency
displayed by
Murillo.
Jan. 15, 1816.

The clemency displayed by Murillo on this occasion brightly contrasted with the barbarity of the Independents. Property was respected, no executions except of a few chiefs followed his victory. Caraccas and the whole sea-coast speedily fell into his hands; the insurgents, broken into separate bands, were driven into the path-

tant prisonniers de guerre que marchands, ou exerçant d'autres professions, lesquels n'avaient jamais pris les armes contre le dictateur, (Bolívar,) et étaient établis à Curaçoa et à Laguera—823 de ces condamnés furent fusillés à Caraccas, et 430 à Guayra. Ces exécutions eurent lieu aux trois jours désignés par le dictateur, sans qu'aucune forme de justice fut remplie. Le dictateur ne voulut attendre aucune représentation—il avait prononcé irrévocablement leur sort. Parmi les victimes de cette terrible sentence se trouvaient des hommes à 80 et plus, qui, à cause de leur grand âge, ou de leurs infirmités, ne pouvaient marcher: ceux furent mis dans un fauteuil, auquel on les attachait fortement, et conduits au lieu de l'exécution." These are the words of the republican general in the service of Venezuela, the biographer of Bolívar, Ducondray Holstein, (i. 59.)

* "The horrible appearance of the city when taken," says an eyewitness, "can hardly be described: the streets and the houses were encumbered with the dead and the dying; the atmosphere was so pestilential when we entered as almost to impede respiration; groans and lamentations were heard on all sides."—GEN. MONKTON to the Spanish Government, Jan. 15, 1816; *Hist. de la Revol. Amer.* 122; and *Mémoires de MURILLO*, 62, 63.

less wilds in the interior ; and Bolivar was constrained to fly to Jamaica, to endeavour to raise funds for a renewal of the war, from the English merchants who favoured the cause of the Independents. Soon after, however, a fresh insurrection broke out in the island of Marguerita, in which the fugitives from Carthagena had taken refuge. A new and formidable partisan, PAEZ, appeared on the side of the Independents, at the head of the redoubtable Gaucho horse from the Pampas ; and after three years of obstinate and bloody hostilities, in the course of which Venezuela suffered beyond example, both from friend and foe, although the capital and chief strongholds were in the hands of the Spaniards, a frightful Vendéan warfare ravaged almost the whole interior of its immense provinces.¹

CHAP.
LXVII.
1818.

¹ Murillo
Mém. 72,
219. Biog.
Univ. lviii.
510, 512,
(Sup. Boli-
var.) Du-
condray
Holstein, i.
200, 338.

It was in this dubious state of the deplorable contest, when victory had declared decidedly in favour of neither party, but the scales rather preponderated to the side of the Royalists, that Great Britain appeared, covertly and insidiously, but most effectively, in the struggle. The excitement of the war had now passed away, and with it in some degree the noble spirit in the people, and the fidelity to engagements in the government, which its dangers had called forth. Distress had prevailed widely in the country from the fall in the price of commodities, resulting from the rise in the value of money which followed the monetary bill of 1819, and cessation of the vast expenditure of the war. Commercial embarrassment, equally with its cupidity, anticipated the opening of an inexhaustible field for the operations of trade in the boundless realms of independent Spanish America ; and political necessity, not less than insidious liberalism, had in some degree loosened the principles of integrity in the government. Loans to a great extent were in consequence advanced by the English capitalists to the insurgent authorities ; and stations were openly appointed at London, Dublin, Glasgow, Liverpool, and all the principal towns in the empire, to enrol recruits for British legions to serve in South America. These troops soon acquired a most formidable consistency from the number of the discharged veterans of Wellington's army who were included in their ranks, and who communicated to them the inestimable advantages of experience and discipline.²

68.
Insidious
assistance
given to the
insurgents by
the British.

² Ann. Reg.
1819, 242,
243.

CHAP.
LXVII.

1819.

69.
Description
of the British
auxiliary
force.

Above ten thousand men, a large proportion of whom were Peninsular veterans, were sent out at different times in the years 1817, 1819, and 1820, although not more than half that number ever appeared in the field, from the dreadful mortality with which they were affected in the unhealthy island of Marguerita, where their principal depot was stationed. Yet even this inconsiderable number doubled the real strength of Bolivar's troops, now sorely reduced by sickness, fatigue, and the sword. They were divided into three legions; the first, three thousand strong, commanded by Colonel Hipplesley, was, from jealousy of their force, blended with Bolivar's other divisions; the second, numbering two thousand five hundred, under Colonel English, and the third, of five thousand, chiefly Irish, under General Devereaux, were allowed to remain together. These brave men joined the cause of the Independents in great part from the natural sympathy of the English heart with the cause of freedom all over the world, and the restlessness of ardent spirits chafing against the weary inaction of a pacific life. But it must ever be considered a dark stain on the English government, that they permitted such powerful succour to be sent to rebels against a closely allied state, not only without hindrance, but with tacit approbation; and that the British legions which finally achieved the dismemberment of the Spanish monarchy in the New World, embarked in great part from the Thames, under the immediate eye of the Administration.¹

¹ Ducondray
Holstein, ii.
115, 120.
Ann. Reg.
1819, 242,
243.

70.
Mutiny in the
Isle of Leon.

While the resources of Bolivar and the insurgents were thus doubled by the powerful succours in men and money obtained from Great Britain, the revolutionary spirit which had been fermenting in Cadiz and in the Spanish army ever since the promulgation of the fatal constitution of 1812, produced an ebullition which halved those of the Royalists, and in its ultimate results has involved Spain in unheard-of calamities. Slowly, but with great perseverance, the Spanish government had been preparing a powerful expedition at Cadiz to reinforce Murillo, on a scale of such magnitude as, if it had reached the shores of the New World, must at once have crushed the insurrection.² But during the long sojourn of the troops at Cadiz, in consequence of the penury of the Spanish treasury,

² Mem. de
Murillo, 229,
240. Hist. de
la Rev. 1820,
153, 171.

and the extraordinary difficulty they experienced in fitting out the expedition, the troops became infected with the contagion of revolutionary principles, and appalled by the frightful accounts sedulously spread amongst them by the democrats of that place, of the sufferings and wasting away of the Royalist forces in the New World.

The consequence was, that on the night of the 7th June, the whole troops in the Isle of Leon broke out into open mutiny, refusing to obey their orders, or embark for the seat of war in America. The revolt was at the moment checked by the vigour and decision of the Conde d'Abisbal, (O'Donnell,) who suddenly surrounded the insurgent camp with a smaller body of troops, who remained true to their colours; but nevertheless this event proved fatal to the expedition, as it was found necessary to disperse the mutineers through the towns in Andalusia, and they could not again be assembled. And on the 5th January 1820, matters were brought to a crisis by the revolt of the whole army, twenty thousand strong, destined for South America—an event which was immediately followed by a revolution in the government at Madrid, and the resignation by General Murillo, who was so deeply implicated with the Royalist party, of the command he had so long maintained with such resolution in the New World.¹

The influence of these events on the contest in the Venezuelan plains speedily appeared. Swelled by the formidable British auxiliaries, the troops under Bolivar ere long mustered fifteen thousand sabres and bayonets; while those under La Torre, who, on the resignation of Murillo, had received the command, were reduced by sickness, fatigue, and the sword, to six thousand. Yet even this diminutive band maintained its ground for eighteen months longer in the country: thus affording decisive evidence that the mass of the people in Venezuela, worn out by revolution and suffering, were far from being hearty in the cause, and that it was domestic treachery and foreign interference, not native vigour, which ultimately decided the contest. But at length the British auxiliaries asserted the inherent superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race, and, for good or for evil, determined the independence of Spanish America. In June 1821, the

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1821.

71.

Which leads
to a revolution
at
Madrid.
June 7, 1819.

Jan. 5, 1820.

¹ Hist de la
Revolution
de 1820, 153
171. Mem.
de Murillo,
230, 240.
Ann. Reg.
1819, 179,
180; and
1820, 221,
227.

72.

Increased
force of the
Independents
in Columbia.

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¹ Ducongray
Holstein, ii.
229, 230.
Ann. Reg.
1821.

73.
Battle of
Carabobo.
June 26.

Spaniards, four thousand strong, were posted in a strong position near CARABOBO, where they were watched by Bolivar at the head of eight thousand men, of whom twelve hundred were British auxiliaries, chiefly Peninsular veterans, and three thousand were cavalry from the Pampas. For twenty days the Spaniards in their strong position set the enemy at defiance, and Bolivar did not venture to attack them; but at length secret information was sent him of a circuitous path by which the right of the Spanish position might be turned. The flower of the army, comprehending the whole British auxiliaries, was despatched under the resolute guidance of General Paez on this perilous expedition.¹

Dreadful hardships were encountered, especially by the British, in the course of the march. Obligated to advance in Indian file along a narrow path, the feet of the soldiers were so lacerated by the sharp flint rocks which they met at every step, that their shoes were soon cut through, and their feet covered with blood. Upon this these resolute men took off their shirts, tore them in pieces, and with their feet thus bandaged, continued their march. Such perseverance was not long of meeting with its reward. Arriving unperceived on the right flank of the Spanish position, La Torre at once saw his defences and intrenchments rendered useless; but he instantly directed a new formation to the right, and prepared to combat on equal terms the assailing force. The Columbians, who formed the first line, were speedily broken by the royal regiment of Burgos; the lancers of Paez were so exhausted by their long and painful march, that the horses were unable to move. Every thing depended on the British auxiliaries; and the Spaniards, deeming the victory secure, advanced with loud shouts against the second line, where they were placed, taking them for Creoles, and anticipating an easy triumph over them. No sooner were they within gunshot, than they opened a heavy fire of musketry, which was well sustained though vigorously returned; and soon after, still taking the enemy for Creoles, surprised at the resistance, they advanced with levelled bayonets. But they soon discovered their mistake. At the same instant the word "Charge!" was given in the British line: and the Spaniards, as they advanced in dis-

order to achieve what they deemed an easy victory, beheld with dismay the dense and steady line of the English emerging, with deafening cheers and levelled bayonets, through the smoke. That charge decided the fate of South America. The Spaniards, thunderstruck, broke and fled; the British followed in close pursuit, and though unsupported—Paez's horse being unable to follow up the advantage—did terrible execution with their bayonets. The Spanish general Morales, who was at the head of fifteen hundred horse, envious of La Torre for having received the superior command, unhappily held back, and never charged the victors when disordered by their rush. Some Spanish brigs, which opened a heavy fire on the flank of the British, were driven off by repeated volleys of musketry. La Torre's men broke and fled on all sides, leaving their camp, cannon, and ammunition in the hands of the victors. Not four hundred of the Spanish troops found refuge in the walls of Porto Cabello.¹

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Every one now saw that the Royalist cause was ruined in Venezuela. Despair at the defeat of La Torre, and the jealousy of Morales, filled every heart with consternation; and in a few weeks after this overthrow, twenty thousand inhabitants of Caraccas, La Guayra, and Porto Cabello, fled from their country and took refuge in the adjacent West India Islands. Caraccas was immediately evacuated, and occupied by the Independents; Carthagera, closely besieged, surrendered in the end of September; Porto Cabello, where La Torre commanded in person, held out longer, but was at length reduced; and the victorious Bolivar, formally installed in the republican government in the capital, proclaimed the independence of Columbia. But he found the principal towns deserted; not a white man was to be seen in the streets; misery and desolation universally prevailed; and the sanguinary dictator, terrified at the emigration of eighty thousand Spaniards, comprising the best families and whole wealth of Venezuela, in vain issued proclamations conjuring them to remain under the republican government.^{2*}

¹ Ducondray
Holstein, ii.
238, 242.
Ann. Reg.
1821, 263,
264.

74.
General
despair of
the Spaniards.

June 29.

Sept. 21.

July 16, 1824.

² Ducondray
Holstein, ii.
238, 245.
Ann. Reg.
1821, 263,
265.

* "L'émigration générale m'a causé la plus profonde douleur. Vous n'avez pu fuir et abandonner vos propriétés, par un mouvement spontané; non que cette fuite, cet abandonnement, pût être causé par la crainte que vous inspiraient les armées de la Colombie ou celles des Espagnols."—*Proclamation par BOLIVAR*, 3d July 1821; DUCONDRAV HOLSTEIN, ii. 245.

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75.

San Martin
establishes
the independ-
ence of
Chili.

The contest for South American freedom was virtually decided on the Venezuelan plains ; but after the independence of Columbia had been secured, much still remained to be done to push the victory to its remote consequences. A dreadful contest had for six years desolated Peru and Chili, in the latter of which SAN MARTIN had organised a republican government, and neither party could yet boast of a decided advantage on that side of the Andes : the Royalist standards still flying in the former country, and the Independents having gained nearly entire possession of the latter. Don José de San Martin was born in Yapeya, in Paraguay, in 1779. Being greatly beloved by all ranks, he was placed at the head of the forces of Buenos Ayres, when an invasion of Chili, to aid the Republicans of that province in establishing their independence, was resolved on in December 1816. By incredible efforts, and no small exertion of skill, he equipped and led across the Andes a corps of four thousand men, with which he attacked and totally defeated the Royalist troops at Chacabuco, on February 12, 1817. This great success led to the immediate establishment of an independent government in Chili, of which he was elected president and commander-in-chief. He accepted, however, only the latter situation, and suggested for the former General O'Higgins, who was accordingly appointed. The remnant of the Spanish army took refuge in a fortified sea-port, Talcahuana ; but being reinforced by five thousand veterans from Peru, they sallied forth eight thousand strong, in spring 1818, and on 19th March totally defeated and dispersed the Independent forces. Such, however, was the vigour of San Martin and O'Higgins, that the broken remains of their troops were quickly reassembled ; and on 5th April 1818, only seventeen days after their former disaster, they attacked and worsted the Royalists at Maypo. From that day the independence of Chili was secured, though the Spaniards still maintained their ground in Peru.¹

¹ Hall's
South Amer.
i. 55, 57.

76.

Prolonged
contest in
Peru.

Encouraged by this success, the Republicans fitted out an expedition, the naval part of which was under the able direction of Lord Cochrane, to rouse the Peruvians to assert their independence ; and the insurgents in the first instance gained considerable successes, and estab-

lished themselves in the most important towns on the sea-coast. Subsequently, however, the Spanish troops had gained with ease three considerable victories; and it was evident that, without external aid, the unwarlike Peruvians would sink before the resolution of the Royalists. Urgent representations of this state of matters were made, and the decisive success gained in Venezuela enabled succours to be sent. In May 1824, however, the triumph of the independents in Columbia having been completed by the fall of Porto Cabello, preparations were made for detaching a powerful expedition across the Andes to co-operate in the expulsion of the Spaniards from the fastnesses of Upper Peru, where Generals Canterac, Valdez, and Oloneta, with fifteen thousand men, still kept the field, watched by the army of the Independents, about ten thousand strong.¹

¹ Miller, *il.*
110, 113.
Ann. Reg.
1824.

Incredible were the hardships undergone by the Republican troops in crossing the Andes. The liberating army, under Bolivar in person, assembled near Huaras, in July 1824, to the number of ten thousand men, and advanced in three divisions to commence the formidable task of surmounting the Cordilleras. Their baggage equipment had previously been rigorously reduced to the lowest state, so that the troops were as lightly accoutred as it was possible for men to be; and Bolivar's excellent regulations had placed every department in the most efficient state. The difficulties to be encountered, however, far exceeded those which opposed either Hannibal or Napoleon in the passage of the Alps. For a hundred leagues the tracks already existing required to be made into roads, and sheds to be erected at intervals in the long barren uninhabited tracts; for shelter to the men and animals at the shivering elevation of ten and twelve thousand feet above the level of the sea. By the indefatigable exertions of General Sucre, the second in command, however, these difficulties were all overcome, and wood for fuel, with magazines of barley and Indian corn, were collected in the sheds which are stationed at intervals in those awful solitudes to afford the weary traveller shelter and repose.²

77.
Preparations
for an expedition across
the Andes
into Peru.

² Miller,
128, 129.

Still, the sufferings of the men in the long and toilsome ascent were extreme. The paths wound up steep ravines

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78.

Passage of
the Andes.

or clefts between precipices of frightful depth, surmounted on either side by inaccessible rocks, starting up into every imaginable and fantastic form. The shelving ledges which afforded the only foothold on the rugged sides of the Andes were so narrow, as to compel the troops to go whole days' journeys in single file, and often spread a regiment over several miles. The deep gulleys or breaks in the tracks, formed by projecting rocks or waterfalls, required to be wound round with extreme caution; a single false step was certain death; and numbers, slipping their feet, were precipitated before the eyes of their comrades hundreds of fathoms down the bare ledges of rock, and perished miserably. Many corps, in spite of the utmost efforts to keep them right, missed their way, and wandered for days up frightful water-courses, without either meeting with their comrades or finding provisions. It was only by constant sounding of the trumpets, and incessant hallooing from one corps to another, that the troops were prevented from being lost amidst the mists and snow-storms of those pathless solitudes. At length, however, all their difficulties were overcome, and Bolivar reviewed his forces, nine thousand strong, on the plain between Rancas and Passo, at the height of twelve thousand feet above the sea.¹

¹ General
Miller, ii.
118, 120.

79.
Splendid
review on the
plateau of
Rancas.

Never were braver forces assembled, nor under more animating circumstances, than the Independent army on this memorable occasion. The view from the table-land on which they stood is perhaps the most magnificent in the world. On the east lay the Andes, whose tremendous ridges had just been surmounted with so much toil; on the west started up endless peaks of the Cordilleras; some wrapt in clouds, others resplendent with glittering snow. North and south the plain was bounded by magnificent chains of mountains, with their summits reposing above the clouds. The troops were assembled on the banks of the noble lake of Reyes, the principal source of the mighty stream of the Amazons. Among the men who were there reviewed, were veterans of all nations; some who had stormed the great redoubt at Borodino—a few who had witnessed the conflagration of Moscow and the capture of Paris; many who had combated on the Douro and the Garonne; others who had surmounted the Pyrenees, and survived the carnage of Waterloo.² But all

² Miller, ii.
128, 129,
*Annuaire
Historique*,
1821, 551.

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were now animated with one spirit ; long service together, difficulties bravely surmounted, hardships endured in common, had created a new bond of union ; and a unanimous shout of enthusiasm burst from all, when the address of the Liberator was read at the head of each regiment, which promised immediate victory, the deliverance of Peru, and the final emancipation of South America, as the reward of their strenuous efforts.

Had Canterac and Valdez, with their numerous veteran troops, attacked the head of Bolivar's columns as they debouched, almost in single file, from the gorges of the Andes, they must have achieved an easy victory. But, misled by the facility with which they had routed several bodies of the Independents in recent actions, they had conceived an undue contempt for their adversaries, made no attempt to unite, and allowed the precious time to pass by without a shot being fired. Roused at length from his slumber, by the appearance of their troops in force on the west of the Andes, Canterac resolved to attack the Independent army alone, as they emerged from the defiles ; and on the 5th, the Royalist army, seven thousand strong, was discerned in their front on the plain of Junin. But the Independents were already extricated from the straits, and Canterac, finding the enemy in greater strength than he expected, placed his cavalry to cover his retreat, and fell back. In an instant the saddles were shifted to the led horses, which were comparatively fresh ; the long Columbian lance was in the horsemen's hands, and the formidable Gauchos of the Pampas prepared to contend with the veteran cavaliers of Spain. The Spaniards, led by Canterac in person, made a masterly charge, and attacked the Independents with such vigour, that their cavalry were at first routed, and the Royalist horse broke in pursuit. Sucrè skilfully took advantage of this circumstance ; the Republicans rallied, and the strength and skill of the South American horsemen, in the single combats to which the contest was now reduced, more than compensated this first success of the Spaniards.

After a terrible shock, in which each could boast of some success, both parties retired, the Spaniards having lost four hundred, the Columbians two hundred and fifty killed and wounded.² The charm of the Spanish cavalry was broken by this action, in which they had upon the

80.
Battle of
Junin.
Aug. 5.

² Miller, *il.*
131, 139.
Ann. Hist.
1824, 581.
Ann. Reg.
1824, 228.

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whole been worsted by the hardy Gauchos of the Pampas. But still the condition of Bolivar's army was very critical, without magazines, in a mountainous country, with the Royalist army, of nearly double its own strength, in front, and the sterile ridges of the Andes in rear.

81.
Approach to
Ayacucho.

Dec. 8.

Both parties, inspired with mutual respect, remained in a state of inactivity after this severe shock ; but the Royalists in the end retired, Bolivar extended his quarters, and, deeming the campaign over, put his troops into cantonments, and himself retired to Lima, to attend to affairs on the coast. Meanwhile Canterac and Valdez, now thoroughly alarmed, effected a junction by an extraordinary march of the latter, and with their united force, twelve thousand strong, advanced against the Independent army, now mustering not more than six thousand lances and bayonets. Alarmed at such a fearful superiority of force, Sucre gradually retired, till he was driven up with his back to the Andes, in circumstances apparently desperate. Canterac and Valdez followed him closely, and on the afternoon of the 8th December occupied the heights of Condorkanki,* twelve thousand feet above the sea, in such strength as to render the situation of the Republicans gloomy in the extreme. Their army occupied the plain of Ayacucho, at the foot of the gigantic wall of Condorkanki, now bristling with the sabres and bayonets of the Royalists ; behind these rose the vast mountain range of the Cordilleras, which rendered all escape impossible. Deeming victory secure, the Royalist generals approached the Independent outposts, and invited them to surrender—a proposition which was indignantly rejected.¹

¹ Miller, ii.
163, 164.

82.
Decisive
battle of
Ayacucho.
Dec. 9.

The morning of the ninth was cold and clear, and when the sun rose above the mountains, his rays shone on as gallant a host in either army as ever contended for the dominion of a mighty continent. The soldiers on both sides were observed rubbing their hands, and exhibiting every mark of satisfaction that this protracted contest was drawing to a termination. With the officers on either side it was literally a question of life or death : for the usages of civilised war had ceased

* Condorkanki, in the language of the country, means "worthy of the Condor."—MILLER, ii. 165.

between these ruthless foes, and the dungeon and the scaffold appeared in certain prospect to the defeated army. At nine o'clock the Royalists with great difficulty descended the steep precipices of Condorkanki, the cavalry leading their horses, the infantry clinging by their hands to the cliffs down which they were moving; on seeing which General Sucre, who commanded the Independent forces, addressed a few animating words to his men, reminding them that upon their efforts that day depended the fate of South America, and that he was assured another day of glory was about to crown their constancy. General Cordova led on the Republican cavalry, exclaiming, as he advanced with his hat in his hand, "Adelante pasc de vencedores!"—"On with the step of conquerors!" On the other side the Viceroy, at the head of the steady Spanish infantry, descended the mountain and advanced to the attack.¹

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The Columbian infantry met them nothing daunted, for the long warfare had made the troops on both sides excellent, and for a few minutes a terrible contest ensued. Soon, however, the Independents prevailed; the Spanish foot were driven back to the steeps of Condorkanki with great slaughter, and numbers dropped under the Columbian fire as they clambered up its rugged sides. In the confusion the Viceroy was wounded and made prisoner. But Valdez, who had not hitherto engaged, opened a heavy fire on the now disordered Independents; two Royalist battalions, fresh and in firm array, descended the cliffs and routed the Peruvian insurgents, who were in hot pursuit; the Spanish foot rallied, hurled their assailants down the rocks, and pursued them with loud cries of victory across the plain. All seemed lost. At this critical instant General Miller, whose brigade was the last Republican reserve, and who commanded the horse, led the hussars of Junin to charge the victorious Royalists in flank: the Spaniards were quickly broken, their artillery taken, and the infantry dispersed. Fourteen hundred of the Royalists were killed, seven hundred, with the Viceroy, made prisoners, and fifteen guns taken. But the Republican loss of eleven hundred killed and wounded,² out of less than six thousand who engaged;

¹ Miller, *il.*
167, 168.
Sucre's Off.
Acc. Ann.
Hist. 1824,
711.

83.
Victory of
the Inde-
pendents.

² Miller, *il.*
167, 170.
Ann. Hist.
1824, 583.
585. Sucre's
Acc. *ibid.*
711. Ann.
Reg. 1821,
1822.

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showed at what a hazard the Independents had contended; and in the decisive struggle the independence of South America was won by the lances of the Pampas, led by the firmness and skill of an English general.*

84.
Capitulation
of Ayacucho;
and Revolution
in
Mexico.

Aug. 14,
1826.

This battle decided the fate of South America. A capitulation was immediately entered into by Canterac, in virtue of which the whole of Peru and Chili was surrendered to the Independents, and the Spanish forces were bound to evacuate entirely both provinces. Rodil, who commanded the fortress of Callao, refused to recognise the capitulation, and prolonged for two years more the defence of that stronghold; but at length he too was forced to capitulate, after a heroic and most resolute defence. Mexico followed the impulse given by those decisive events. An insurrection against the royal authority in that province had, indeed, commenced so early as 1810, and was carried on with various success till 1819, when it was almost extinguished. The next year, however, the accounts received of the revolution in Spain caused such a general ferment that the revolt broke out afresh; and all proposals for a compromise with the old country being rejected by the Cortes at Madrid, the insurgents prevailed, and ITURBIDE their leader was elected emperor in May 1822. Disputes soon arising between him and his congress, he abdicated the throne and left the country; when a republican government was, in 1823, established in this splendid region, by whose independence the Spanish authority was finally extinguished in the New World.^{1†}

¹ Ann. Hist.
1824, 711,
App. and
Ann. Reg.
1824, 214,
216.

Thus was accomplished, from the results of the French invasion of Spain, the ultimate independence of South America—a result so vast and important as to justify the historian in outstepping the period which his narrative in general embraces, and tracing out, in a slight sketch, those momentous changes to their termination. Never was a

* It is an instance of Spanish gratitude that the name of General Miller, to whose skill and courage this victory was mainly owing, is never mentioned in the Spanish official account, though it is admitted that it was the hussars of Junin whom he commanded who won the victory.—See Suck's *Official Account*, *Annuaire Historique*, 1824, 1824, 710, 711.

† The fate of Iturbide was very melancholy. In July 1824 he was induced, by the hope of being useful to his country in the event of an attempt being made to reconquer it by Spain, to return to Mexico, where, in pursuance of a decree made by the republican government in his absence, and with the existence of which he was unacquainted, he was immediately arrested and shot.

revolution which was looked to with more anxiety over the whole civilised world, or one from which more important results to the best interests of humanity was anticipated. And what has been the result? It has, hitherto at least, been calamitous in the extreme. Unprepared for freedom by the previous exercise of even the smallest of its rights; mingling in their bosoms the pride of Castilian descent with the fierce passions of Creole blood; without any rational religion to restrain their excesses; generally ignorant, and universally stained with revolutionary crime, the South Americans have fallen into a series of political calamities almost without a parallel. They have become the victims of revolutions so frequent, of civil dissensions so incessant, that history, in despair, has ceased attempting to trace their thread; and the awful interval of obscure bloodshed and devastation may be darkly judged of from the following appalling facts. The depopulation of the South American states during the continuance of the contest has been such, that in the richest and most important of them, the number of the people at its close was little above *a half* of what it had been when the Revolution began.* Some of the greatest cities which it contained have been unpeopled; almost all have been reduced to half their former number of inhabitants.† The mines, both in Mexico and Peru, for long ceased to be worked; and the population of the town of Potosi, maintained by their labour, had sunk from a hundred and fifty thousand to *eight thousand* inhabitants.‡

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85.

Disastrous
revolutionary
troubles, and
vast decline
of population,
in which these
changes have
issued.

* "La population de Caracas avant les dernières révolutions était évaluée à près d'un million d'habitans, dont 200,000 Espagnols, 450,000 gens de couleur libres, 60,000 esclaves, et 280,000 Indiens. Aujourd'hui cette partie de la Colombie forme les trois départemens de l'Oronoque, de Venezuela, et de Sülle, dont la population par suite des discordes civiles a été réduite à 557,000 âmes."—MALTE BRUN, xi. 512.

	1810.	1826.
† "Population de la cité de Caracas, . . .	31,813	21,400
— Calabrosa, . . .	30,783	18,000
— Bogota, . . .	80,000	50,000

"Margarita avait perdu 5000 habitans; le district de Barcelonne, 12,000; Maracaybo, 6000; Coro, 4000; enfin, le nombre des individus périés par la guerre et la famine, depuis 1810, se monte dans les seuls pays que nous venons de nommer, au nombre de 200,000. Qu'on juge par comparaison de ce qu'il doit avoir péri d'hommes dans les autres provinces."—*Histoire de la Révolution de 1820 en Espagne*, par CH.—(a Republican writer,) p. 19; and DUCONDRAY HOLSTEIN, i. 23.

‡ "The town of Potosi contained, so early as 1611, 150,000 inhabitants. By the abolition of the meta, and the shocks which wealthy establishments received during the Revolution, it was reduced in 1826 to 8000."—GENERAL MILLER'S *Memoirs*, ii. 239.

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Commerce, sharing in the general ruin, has so signally declined, that, ten years after the contest with Old Spain had entirely ceased, the foreign trade of the emancipated states was not half of what it had been with Europe before the contest began ; and, instead of increasing under the influence of republican institutions, it is still in most places diminishing.*

86.
Almost entire stoppage of the mines of gold and silver, and the disastrous effects flowing from it.

Important as the effects of the great diminution of the trade of Europe with the South American republics were to the whole commercial world, this importance was greatly enhanced by the prodigious diminution in the supply of the precious metals for the general intercourse of nations, which resulted from these disastrous convulsions. It has been already mentioned, that the mines in America supplied, previous to the Spanish revolution, 43,000,000 piastres, or about £10,000,000 a-year, being nine-tenths of the whole supply of the globe. But in consequence of the revolutionary troubles, which continued for fourteen years, and the destruction of capital and industry consequent on them, the supply from the mines, both in Mexico and Peru, was so much diminished, that for many years it did not exceed a fifth part of what it had formerly been, and in some years was hardly a tenth.† For several years the great mines of Mexico, the richest in the world, produced nothing ; in others, those of Peru did not yield a tenth of their former amount. Upon the whole, from 1810 to 1830, the average annual supply of the precious metals for the use of the globe, was not more than a third of what it had been in the preceding twenty years. This, too, occurred at a time when the re-establishment of peace had greatly augmented the commercial intercourse of men ; when an increasing population and mutual traffic every where imperatively called for an enlarged circulating medium ; and when the vast and universal progress of luxury was daily absorbing a larger quantity of the precious metals in plate and objects of private ornament.‡

¹ See Porter's
Parl. Tables,
v. 170.

Incalculable is the effect which this prodigious diminution in the supply of the precious metals has had on

* See Appendix, B, Chap. lxvii.

† See Appendix, C, Chap. lxvii.

‡ See on this subject Appendix, D, Chap. lxvii., where three most interesting tables are given. They afford the real key to the subsequent political changes in the British empire.

the fortunes of the British empire. England having been, during the time that it was going on, the great workshop of the globe, the centre of commercial intercourse, the spring of commercial activity, for the whole world, the effect of any material change in the value of the circulating medium was much more powerfully felt by its inhabitants than by those of any other country. Combined with the simultaneous and still more disastrous contraction of the currency by the English Act of 1819, which compelled the Bank of England to resume its payments in gold, it produced a greater and more disastrous effect on private fortunes in England than any thing recorded in her annals. Thence the constant decline of prices which was felt by the commercial classes as so sore an evil during this whole period, and the effects of which still continue with very little abatement. The feverish excitement of 1823 and 1824, originating in a great measure in the unbounded expectations of commercial prosperity which were generally entertained in this country from the final establishment of South American independence, only augmented the general distress, from the frightful catastrophe in which it terminated. All attempts to work the mines by British capital have failed, in consequence of the turbulence and insecurity of the country; and above a hundred and fifty millions of British money have been lost in those disastrous mining speculations, or in loans to the faithless insolvent republics of the New World.* All classes suffered by this diminution in the supply of the precious metals, and consequent fall in the money price of every article of consumption, except the fundholders and the capitalists, who have proportionably gained; and thence the general discontent which prevailed from 1815 to 1830.

The incomes of the landholders for a quarter of a century were declining, and the weight of their debts was increasing; the farmers, from the fall in the price of their produce, were progressively impoverished: all who gained their livelihood by buying and selling—in other words, the whole mercantile classes—found their stock daily

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87.
Disastrous
influence of
this change
on Great
Britain.

88.

Its influence
in producing
the Reform
Bill.

* The amount lost by Britain in loans to North and South America and the revolutionary government of Spain, was stated by Lord Palmerston at this enormous amount, in parliament on 17th July 1847.

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sink in value. In making the transition from high to low prices, a whole generation suffered distress—great part of it was ruined. It was exactly the converse of the vast spring to industry which resulted from the rise of prices consequent on the first discovery of the South American mines. Thence the general dissatisfaction and desire for change which overturned the equilibrium of British society, swept away the bulwarks of British thought, and produced that general uneasiness and longing after change which terminated in the Reform Bill. Such was the fruit which England reaped from its insidious attempt, in the face of solemn treaties, to dismember the Spanish empire, and force revolution upon a people unprepared for freedom. Mr Canning boasted in 1823 that he had called a new world into existence to redress the balance of the old ; but in so doing he wellnigh submerged his own country. The moral laws of nature are of universal application and unceasing activity—*Non alia Romæ, alia Athenæ*. France, as the natural consequence of, and just retribution for her iniquitous interference in the North American insurrection, received twenty years of bloodshed and the revolution of 1789 ; England, as the natural consequence of, and righteous punishment for, her perfidious support of the South American revolt, received fifteen years of distress and the revolution of 182.*

89.
Disastrous
effect of the
Revolution
in South
America on
the British
colonial em-
pire.

But these social and political changes at home are neither the only, nor the most material ones, which have followed the English interference in the South American revolution. Consequences equally important, perhaps in their ultimate issues still more calamitous, have ensued from it to the British colonial empire in America. Mexico, surrendered to the weakening effect of its own passions, and the desolation of a premature and perilous freedom, has become the prey of a succession of tyrants, so bloodthirsty and licentious that private worth has fled from the direction of affairs ; and public prosperity and national strength have, for the time at least, disappeared from the realm. No counterpoise thus exists to the expansion of the United States in North America. They

* See ALISON's "*England in 1815 and 1845*," where the author has endeavoured to explain this most important and interesting subject.

will expand over Mexico as they have done over Texas, and, between squatting, appropriation, and intimidation, swallow up the whole magnificent realm won for the Castilian crown by the sword of Cortes. England will look in vain for an ally in the New World, to aid her in combating the growing strength, and curbing the ambitious designs, of her aspiring offspring. British prudence and valour may avert the catastrophe for a time ; but it is evident that, without an ally there to aid us in the conflict, our noble North American colonies, nourishing now nearly a million tons of British shipping, with our once splendid West Indian islands, must be wrested from us by a nation already numbering eighteen millions of souls within its bounds, and doubling every quarter of a century. England, from motives of gain, interfered, covertly and discredibly, to wrest from Spain her American colonies, and as a just retribution she will, from the consequences of her injustice, probably lose her own.

In despair at such results from a political movement in the effects of which they had contemplated an unbounded field for social regeneration and commercial speculation, the English people have ceased to take any interest in the South American republics ; they have transferred their desires rather to securing the Brazilian market, where, amidst the miseries of the worst species of slavery, the security of property under a monarchical government has reared up an opening for their manufactures of greater extent than the whole Spanish republics put together, albeit with a population four-fold greater.* They had little sympathy for commonwealths who began their career by insolvency and dishonesty, with repudiation of the creditors who had supported them in their distress, and ingratitude to the heroes who had established their independence ; † where dividends were not to be obtained on stocks, nor prices for cargoes ; where bloodshed was universal, turmoil incessant, and mankind seemed to crouch only to a succession of tyrants. Intent only on gain, the English people no sooner found that the South American

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Ultimate
prospects of
the Spanish
race in the
New World.

* See Appendix, B, Chap. lxvii. where their comparative commerce is given.

† " Il est triste d'ajouter, que les braves corps d'Anglais qui contribuèrent beaucoup aux succès des campagnes de Bolivar ne furent récompensés que par de mauvais traitemens, la misère, la maladie, et la mort."—DUCONDRAY HOLSTEIN, *Vie de Bolivar*, ii. 113.

CHAP.
LXVII.

1826.

91.
Ultimate im-
provement
of Spanish
America in
the school of
suffering.

republics had ceased to afford a market for their produce, than they turned their turbulent activity in other directions, and engaged in fresh projects of foreign aggrandisement, and wild schemes of social change.

But amidst all this unbounded disaster, a great moral renovation has been going on in these wasted realms in the only school of real improvement—the school of suffering. The Spaniards have indelibly implanted their seed in their transatlantic colonies; the energy which was alone wanting to enable them to cultivate their wilds, has perhaps been acquired amidst the unspeakable suffering of the last thirty years. A great destiny awaits that once noble people, if they can cast off their corruptions. The revolution came too soon for the interests of the existing generation in Spanish America, and England has been justly punished for the part she took, from selfish motives, in bringing it about. But Providence can overrule even the sins of men to the ultimate welfare of humanity. And those who despair of the fortunes of the Spanish race in South America, because they have slaughtered each other with such cruelty, and their revolution has hitherto terminated in nothing but disaster, would do well to look back to the usages of war in England during the contest of the Roses, or the national freedom she enjoyed during the usurpation of Cromwell; and reflect on the issue to which Supreme Wisdom has in the end conducted bloodshed as universal, and military despotism as oppressive, as that which has hitherto blasted all the hopes of humanity in the New World.

APPENDIX.

CHAPTER LXIV.

Note A, p. 56

TABLE showing the progressive Number of Commitments in England, Scotland, and Ireland, in the undermentioned years.

Year.	England.	Scotland.	Ireland.
1805,	4,605	—	3,600
1806,	4,346	—	3,781
1807,	4,446	—	3,522
1808,	4,735	—	3,704
1809,	5,330	—	3,641
1810,	5,146	—	3,799
1811,	5,337	—	4,162
1812,	6,576	—	4,386
1813,	7,164	—	—
1814,	6,390	—	—
1815,	7,818	No prior regular	No returns during
1816,	9,091	returns for Scot-	this period in Ire-
1817,	13,932	land.	land.
1818,	13,567	—	—
1819,	14,254	—	—
1820,	13,710	1,486	—
1821,	13,115	1,522	—
1822,	12,241	1,691	15,251
1823,	12,263	1,733	14,632
1824,	13,698	1,802	15,258
1825,	14,437	1,876	15,515
1826,	16,164	1,999	16,318
1827,	17,924	2,116	18,031
1828,	16,564	2,024	14,683
1829,	18,675	2,063	15,271

Year	England.	Scotland.	Ireland.
1830,	18,107	2,329	15,794
1831,	19,647	2,451	16,192
1832,	20,829	2,431	16,056
1833,	20,072	2,564	17,819
1834,	22,451	2,691	21,381
1835,	20,731	2,837	21,205
1836,	20,984	2,922	23,891
1837,	23,612	3,126	14,804
1838,	23,094	3,418	15,723
1839,	24,443	3,409	26,392
1840,	27,187	3,872	23,833
1841,	27,760	3,562	20,796
1842,	31,309	—	—

It is impossible to avoid the suspicion that, since 1836, some change, to conceal the fearful increase of Irish crime, has been made in the mode of making up the returns.—See PORTER'S *Progress of the Nation*, iii. 178-227.

That the spread of the mere power of reading and writing by means of education has no tendency to check this alarming progress, is clear from the subjoined analysis of the state of education of criminals in England and Scotland in the six last years, as obtained from the parliamentary returns.

Year.	Country.	Neither read nor write.	Could read and write imperfectly.	Well.	Super-educated.	Not known.	TOTAL.	
							Educated.	Uneduc.
1836,	England,	7,033	10,988	2,915	191	569	13,969	7,033
—	Scotland,	639	1,427	489	55	—	1,921	539
—	Ireland,	10,030	3,058	7,334	—	—	10,310	10,030
1837,	England,	7,464	10,298	2,234	101	515	12,633	7,464
—	Scotland,	693	1,772	520	68	73	2,360	693
—	Ireland,	6,336	3,056	4,511	—	—	7,567	6,336
1838,	England,	7,943	10,334	2,057	79	481	12,490	7,943
—	Scotland,	551	2,070	630	93	74	2,793	551
—	Ireland,	6,808	2,773	4,727	—	—	7,500	6,808
1839,	England,	7,296	13,071	2,062	78	636	15,210	7,296
—	Scotland,	610	2,104	508	57	—	2,681	610
—	Ireland,	6,647	3,630	6,468	—	—	10,088	6,647
1840,	England,	9,058	15,149	2,053	101	666	17,303	9,058
—	Scotland,	851	2,297	559	71	—	1,927	851
—	Ireland,	8,400	3,620	6,468	—	—	10,088	8,400
1841,	England,	9,220	15,732	2,253	126	660	18,111	9,220
—	Scotland,	696	2,348	654	42	—	2,894	696
—	Ireland,	7,152	3,084	5,651	—	—	8,735	7,152

—PORTER'S *Progress of the Nation*, iii. 201, 214, 215, 232.

The following Table exhibits the Progress of Crime in relation to Education in England for the last seven years, in centesimal proportions:—

Year.	Unable to read and write.	Able to read and write imperfectly.	Able to read and write well.	Instruction superior to reading and writing well.	Instruction could not be ascertained.	Total.
1836	33·52	52·23	10·56	0·91	2·68	100
1837	35·85	52·08	9·46	0·43	2·18	100
1838	34·40	53·41	9·77	0·34	2·08	100
1839	33·53	53·48	10·07	0·33	2·60	100
1840	33·32	55·57	8·29	0·37	2·45	100
1841	33·21	56·67	7·49	0·45	2·27	100
1842	33·35	56·32	6·77	0·29	2·34	100

—*Parliamentary Criminal Tables for the Year 1842*. Printed 5th May 1843. Preface, p. 7.; and M'CULLOCH, *Stat. of Great Britain*, i. 476-7.

Note B, p. 58.

Table showing the amount of Bank Notes in Circulation from 1792 to 1815, with the commercial paper under discount at the Bank during the same period, and the gold and silver annually coined at the Bank.

Year.	Total of Notes.	Commercial Paper rendered at Bank.	Bullion coined.
1792,	£11,307,380	£———	£1,171,863
1793,	11,388,910	———	2,747,430
1794,	10,744,020	———	2,568,895
1795,	14,017,510	2,946,500	493,416
1796,	16,729,520	3,505,000	464,680
1797,	11,114,120	5,350,000	2,600,297
1798,	13,095,830	4,460,600	2,967,565
1799,	12,959,610	5,403,900	449,962
1800,	16,854,800	6,401,900	189,937
1801,	16,203,280	7,905,100	450,242
1802,	15,186,880	7,523,100	437,019
1803,	15,849,980	10,747,600	956,445
1804,	17,077,880	9,982,400	718,397
1805,	17,871,170	11,365,500	54,668
1806,	17,730,120	12,380,100	405,106
1807,	16,950,680	13,484,600	None.
1808,	14,183,860	12,950,100	371,714
1809,	18,542,860	15,475,700	298,946
1810,	21,019,600	20,070,600	316,936
1811,	23,360,220	14,355,400	312,263
1812,	23,408,320	14,291,600	None.
1813,	23,210,930	12,330,200	519,722
1814,	24,801,000	13,285,800	None.
1815,	27,261,650	14,917,100	None.
1816,	27,013,620	11,416,400	None.

—MOREAU'S *Tables*; and PERRER, 279. MARSHALL'S *Digest*, pp. 971, 147, 236.

Note C, p. 77.

Table I., showing the Progress of Foreign and British Shipping from the year 1801 to 1823, when the reciprocity system began:—

Year.	BRITISH.		FOREIGN.		TOTAL.	
	Ships.	Tons.	Ships.	Tons.	Ships.	Tons.
1801	4,987	922,594	5,497	780,155	10,484	1,702,749
1802	7,806	1,333,005	3,728	480,251	11,534	1,813,256
1803	6,264	1,115,702	4,254	638,104	10,518	1,753,806
1804	4,865	904,932	4,271	607,299	9,136	1,512,231
1805	5,167	953,250	4,517	691,883	9,684	1,645,133
1806	5,211	904,367	3,793	612,904	9,004	1,517,271
1807	—	—	4,087	680,144	—	—
1808	—	—	1,926	283,657	—	—
1809	5,615	938,675	4,922	759,287	10,537	1,697,962
1810	5,154	896,001	6,876	1,176,243	12,030	2,072,244
1811	—	—	3,216	687,180	—	—
*1812	—	—	—	—	—	—
*1813	—	—	—	—	—	—
1814	8,975	1,290,248	5,286	599,287	14,261	1,889,535
1815	8,880	1,372,108	5,314	746,985	14,194	2,119,093
1816	9,744	1,415,723	3,116	379,465	12,860	1,795,188
1817	11,255	1,625,121	3,396	445,011	14,651	2,070,132
1818	13,006	1,886,394	6,238	762,457	19,244	2,648,851
1819	11,974	1,809,128	4,215	542,684	16,189	2,351,812
1820	11,285	1,668,060	3,472	447,611	14,757	1,115,671
1821	10,810	1,599,274	3,261	396,256	14,071	1,995,530
1822	11,087	1,664,186	3,389	469,151	14,476	2,133,337

* Records destroyed by fire.

Table II., showing the Progress of British and Foreign Shipping from 1823, the first year of the reciprocity system, to 1836 :—

Year.	BRITISH.		FOREIGN.		TOTAL.	
	Ships.	Tons.	Ships.	Tons.	Ships.	Tons.
1823	11,271	1,740,859	4,069	582,996	15,340	2,323,855
1824	11,733	1,797,320	5,653	759,441	17,386	2,556,761
1825	13,516	2,144,598	6,986	958,132	20,484	3,102,730
1826	12,473	1,950,630	5,729	694,116	18,202	2,644,746
1827	13,133	2,086,898	6,046	751,864	19,179	2,839,762
1828	13,436	2,094,357	4,955	634,620	18,391	2,728,977
1829	13,659	2,184,525	5,218	710,303	18,877	2,894,828
1830	13,548	2,180,042	5,359	758,828	18,907	2,938,870
1831	14,488	2,367,322	6,085	874,605	20,573	3,241,927
1832	13,372	2,185,980	4,546	639,979	17,918	2,825,959
1833	13,119	2,183,814	5,505	762,085	18,624	2,945,899
1834	13,903	2,298,263	5,894	833,905	19,797	3,132,168
1835	14,295	2,442,734	6,005	866,990	20,300	3,309,724
1836	14,347	2,505,743	7,131	988,899	21,478	3,494,372

Table III., showing the Progress of Exports to, and Shipping with, the countries with which reciprocity treaties have been concluded, compared with those with which there have been no such treaties, and the British colonies :—

				BRITISH.		FOREIGN.		EXPORTS.
				Ships.	Tons.	Ships.	Tons.	L.
I. Reciprocity Countries.	1822. Total tonnage and exports to reciprocity countries, }			3913	469,726	2708	383,924	18,084,013
	1838. Do. Do.			5042	714,881	7044	990,328	21,270,705
II. Non-Recip. Countries.	1822. Do. Do.			2573	407,847	676	82,432	8,355,854
	1838. Do. Do.			4715	783,359	1599	217,515	15,101,765
III. British Colonies.	1822. Do. Do.			4421	786,613	5	795	10,626,156
	1838. Do. Do.			6362	1,287,157	29	2,823	13,689,267

Table IV., showing the amount of Shipping, distinguishing British from Foreign, employed between Great Britain and the undermentioned countries, from 1821 to 1839 :—

Year.	SWEDEN.		NORWAY.		DENMARK.		PRUSSIA.		FRANCE.	
	British Tons.	Foreign Tons.	British Tons.	Foreign Tons.	British Tons.	Foreign Tons.	British Tons.	Foreign Tons.	British Tons.	Foreign Tons.
1881	23,005	8,508	13,855	61,342	5,812	3,989	79,590	37,730	103,337	64,178
1882	20,799	13,692	13,377	57,374	7,096	3,910	109,847	58,370	101,098	49,727
1883	20,866	22,629	13,122	117,015	4,413	4,795	81,202	86,013	85,124	49,578
1884	17,074	40,092	11,419	135,379	6,738	23,689	94,664	161,621	82,650	52,648
1885	15,908	53,141	14,825	157,910	15,158	50,943	189,214	183,753	78,888	55,539
1886	11,889	16,939	15,603	90,736	22,900	66,544	119,060	120,589	89,301	87,171
1887	11,719	21,522	13,945	96,420	10,835	63,456	150,718	109,184	102,879	67,076
1888	14,577	24,700	10,826	85,771	17,464	49,293	138,753	99,195	102,623	83,302
1889	16,536	25,046	9,985	86,905	24,576	53,360	125,918	127,861	106,548	59,756
1890	19,116	23,158	6,459	84,585	12,210	51,420	102,758	139,646	110,766	111,779
1891	11,460	38,689	4,518	114,865	6,552	62,190	83,908	140,532	97,057	73,159
1892	8,335	25,755	3,798	82,155	7,268	35,772	62,079	89,187	110,793	63,509
1893	10,009	20,454	5,901	98,931	6,840	38,630	41,735	108,753	103,610	63,682
1894	15,353	35,910	6,403	98,303	5,691	53,982	32,021	118,111	128,017	74,382
1895	12,086	35,661	2,692	95,049	6,007	49,008	25,514	124,144	146,607	100,860
1896	10,865	42,439	1,573	125,876	2,152	51,907	42,567	174,439	138,339	108,302
1897	7,608	42,602	1,035	88,004	5,357	55,961	67,866	145,742	220,350	131,073
1898	10,425	38,991	1,304	110,817	3,466	57,554	80,734	175,043	273,446	171,577
1899	8,359	49,370	2,532	109,238	5,535	106,960	111,470	229,308	312,183	200,228

—Parliamentary Paper, 28th May 1840.

For the valuable Returns from which the preceding extracts are made, the British public are indebted to the motions of my able and eloquent friend, Mr Colquhoun of Killermont, M.P. for Kilmarnock, to whose exertions in the cause of religion and humanity Scotland and Ireland are already so much indebted.

Note D, p. 102.

BUDGET OF 1811

INCOME, ORDINARY.		EXPENDITURE.	
Customs, . . .	£6,802,402	Interest of Debt, . .	£20,749,828
Excise, . . .	18,489,914	Life Annuities, . . .	1,540,257
Stamps, . . .	5,090,478	Sinking Fund, . . .	13,084,274
Land and Assessed, . .	6,868,230		
Post Office, . . .	1,274,000	Total of Debt Funded, .	£34,374,350
Small Taxes, . . .	87,605	Interest of Exchequer Bills, . . .	1,556,753
Total Ordinary Net, .	£38,612,629		
Hereditary Revenue, .	65,814	Total charge of debts, funded and unfunded, }	£35,931,094
<i>War Taxes.</i>			
Customs, . . .	£2,633,919	Civil List, . . .	1,472,403
Excise, . . .	6,410,139	Do. Scotland, . . .	109,693
Property Taxes, . . .	12,941,155	Miscellaneous, . . .	596,549
Arrears, . . .	14,336	Navy, . . .	19,540,678
Lottery, . . .	281,386	Army, . . .	23,869,359
Proportion of Irish Loan for England, .	2,752,796	Ordnance, . . .	4,557,509
Smaller Sums, . . .	253,866	Loans to Foreign States, . . .	7,410,039
	£63,965,990	Miscellaneous, . . .	1,962,636
English Loan, . . .	16,636,375		
Total, Britain, . . .	£80,602,365	For United Kingdom, .	£95,450,080
Irish Loan and Taxes, .	10,309,000	Deduct for Ireland, . .	4,489,462
Grand Total, . . .	£90,911,365		£90,960,598

—Finance Accounts, Ann. Reg. 1812, 398, 409; and Parl. Deb. xxii. 1-34, App.

Note E, p. 103.

BUDGET OF 1812.

INCOME, PERMANENT.		EXPENDITURE.	
Customs,	£8,296,289	Interest of Funded Debt,	£21,361,252
Excise,	17,800,248	Life Annuities,	1,529,659
Stamps,	3,313,986	Management,	233,705
Land and Assessed,	7,373,157		
Post Office,	1,534,608		
Smaller Duties,	90,692		
			£23,124,616
Permanent and Annual Taxes,	£38,408,980	Sinking Fund,	13,482,510
Hereditary Revenue,	106,630		
War Taxes and Resources.		Total charge of Debt funded,	£36,607,126
Customs,	£2,948,330	Interest of Exchequer Bills,	1,835,369
Excise,	5,206,754		
Property Tax,	13,368,606	Total charge of Debt, funded and unfunded,	£38,442,495
Lottery,	350,145	Civil List, &c. . . .	1,635,601
Proportion of Irish Loan,	2,793,313	Do. Scotland,	112,748
Exchequer Bills repaid,	910,470	Bounties, Pensions, Drawbacks, &c. . . .	582,675
Smaller Sources,	352,931	Navy,	20,500,339
		Army,	24,987,362
Total, exclusive of Loans,	£64,446,159	Ordnance,	4,252,409
Loans, including for Ireland, £4,350,000 }	29,268,586	Foreign Loans,	8,204,028
East Ind. 2,500,000 }		Miscellaneous,	1,779,089
		East India Co.'s Loans,	2,498,000
Total,	£93,714,745	Advance on Commercial Exchequer Bills,	1,375,141
		Total,	£104,369,887
		Deduct for Service of Ireland,	6,848,516
		Total Expenditure of Great Britain,	£97,521,371

—*Financial Account* for the year ending 5th January 1813; *Parl. Deb.* pp. 2-23, 24; *Ann. Reg.* 1813, p. 328.

Note F. p. 105.

Propositions submitted by Mr Mackenzie, on behalf of the British Government, to the French Government, and rejected by them :—

“*Projet d'une convention pour l'échange des prisonniers de guerre, présenté par M. Mackenzie à M. Moustier.*”

“ART. I.—Tous les Anglais, tous les Espagnols, Portugais, Siciliens, Hano-vriens, et autres sujets de, ou au service de, la Grande Bretagne, ou des puissances en alliance avec elle, qui sont maintenant prisonniers de guerre en France, en Italie, à Naples, en Hollande, ou dans tout autre pays en alliance avec, ou dépendant de, la France, seront relâchés sans exception.

“ART. II.—Tous les Français, Italiens, et autres personnes sujets de, ou au service de France, ou d'Italie, tous les Hollandais et Napolitains, et tous autres sujets, ou au service des puissances alliées de la France, qui sont maintenant prisonniers de guerre dans la Grande Bretagne, l'Espagne, la Sicile, le Portugal, le Brésil, et dans tous autres pays en alliance avec la Grande Bretagne, ou occupés par des troupes Britanniques, seront relâchés sans exception.

“ART. IV. *Sec. I.*—Tous les prisonniers Britanniques, de quelque rang et qualité qu'ils soient, qui sont détenus en France, et en Italie, et dans les dépen-

dances de la France, et de l'Italie, seront libérés. L'échange devra commencer immédiatement après la signature de cette convention, en envoyant à Deal ou à Portsmouth, ou à tout autre port d'Angleterre dans la Manche dont on sera convenu, ou en remettant aux commissaires Britanniques, qui seront nommés pour les recevoir, mille prisonniers Britanniques pour mille Français, qui seront relâchés par le gouvernement Britannique de la manière stipulée ci-après.

"*Secr. 2.*—Tous les prisonniers Français, de tout rang et qualité, maintenant détenus dans la Grande Bretagne, ou dans les possessions Britanniques, seront relâchés. L'échange commencera immédiatement après la signature de cette convention, et se fera en envoyant successivement à Morlaix, ou dans tout autre port Français de la Manche dont il pourra être convenu, ou en délivrant aux commissaires Français, mille prisonniers Français pour mille prisonniers Anglais, aussi promptment et dans la même proportion que le gouvernement relâchera les derniers.

“ *Art. 6.*—Lorsque tous les prisonniers Britanniques détenus en France, en Italie, et dans leurs dépendances, auront été échangés pour un nombre égal (à régler et fixer sur le principe établi dans la section précédente de cet article) de prisonniers Français détenus en Angleterre et dans ses possessions, la balance de prisonniers Français qui pourront rester dans les nains de la Grande Bretagne seront relâchés sans délai, et envoyés en France en échange d'un nombre égal de prisonniers de guerre Espagnols, lesquels seront envoyés à tels ports ou à telles villes d'Espagne qui seront convenus, et de la manière suivante.

« Sect. 13.—Tous les Portugais et Siciliens prisonniers en France, ou dans les pays alliés ou dépendant de la France, et tous les prisonniers appartenant à la France, et à ses alliés, qui seront dans les mains des Portugais et des Siciliens, seront relâchés mutuellement et de la même manière et aux mêmes conditions qui ont été stipulées ci-dessus par rapport aux Français et aux Espagnols, avec telles modifications seulement que les circonstances et la situation particulière de ces pays pourront requérir.—*Mémoires d'un Homme d'Etat*, ii, 438—484.

CHAPTER LXV.

Note A, p. 146.

GENERAL STATE OF THE FRENCH ARMIES IN SPAIN.

15th January 1811.

Present under arms.		Detached.		Absent.	Effective	Horses.	
Men.	Horses.	Men.	Horses.	Hospital.	Men.	Cavalry.	Draught.
295,227	52,462	17,780	4,714	48,831	361,838	41,189	15,987

15th April 1811.

276,575 | 46,990 | 15,121 | 2,166 | 40,079 | 331,776 | 37,855 | 11,301

ARMY OF PORTUGAL.—1st April 1811.

Under arms.		Detached.		Hospital.	Effective.	
Men.	Horses.	Men.	Horses.	Men.	Men.	Horses.
51,237	11,717	3,716	—	12,229	68,051	11,142

ARMY OF THE SOUTH—Soutt, Duke of Dalmatia, commanding.—15th May.

75,133	13,124	3,915	1,336	11,420	90,468	Cavalry. 12,156	Draught. 2,304
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5th Corps.—15th January.

Under arms.		Detached.		Hospital.	Effective.	Horses.	
Men.	Horses.	Men.	Horses.	Men.	Men.	Cavalry.	Draught.
18,767	6,158	3,035	640	—	—	—	—

1st Corps, before Cadiz.—15th February 1811.

25,781	2,861	1,331	681	1,997	29,409	2,207	1,035
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4th Corps.—15th February.

22,723	5,464	741	397	2,577	26,033	5,069	793
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*ARMY OF THE NORTH—Bessières, Duke of Istria, commanding.**1st February 1811.*

58,515	8,874	1,992	—	6,860	67,767	7,979	1,073
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15th April 1811.

53,148	6,930	2,221	—	5,350	60,719	6,065	879
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—NAPIER, iii. 576—581.

CHAPTER LXVI.

Note A, p. 214.

Summary of the Force of the Anglo-Portuguese Army, exclusive of Drummers and Artillerymen.—October 1, 1811.

CAVALRY.

	Present.	Sick.	Command.	Prisoners.	Total.
British,	3,571	1,114	947	298	5,930
Portuguese,	1,373	256	1,140	—	2,769
Total Cavalry, 4,944		1,370	2,087	298	8,699

INFANTRY.

	Present.	Sick.	Command.	Prisoners.	Total.
British,	29,530	17,974	2,663	1,684	51,851
Portuguese,	23,689	6,009	1,707	75	31,480
Total Infantry, 53,219		23,983	4,370	1,759	83,331

General total, including sergeants, 58,263 sabres and bayonets in the field.

Note B, p. 215.

Summary of the French Force in Spain at different periods, extracted from the Imperial Muster-Rolls.

	UNDER ARMS.		DETACHED.		ABSENT.	EFFECTIVE.	
	Men.	Horses.	Men.	Horses.	Hospital.	Men.	Horses.
Aug. 1811.	279,637	41,598	50,583	10,869	42,433	372,841	52,467
Jan. 1812.	258,156	41,049	22,805	5,434	42,056	324,933	42,348
Apr. 1812.	244,692	36,747	12,260	3,849	34,369	291,379	40,653

August 1, 1811.

	UNDER ARMS.		DETACHED.		Hospital.	EFFECTIVE.		
	Men.	Horses.	Men.	Horses.		Men.	Horses.	
Armée du Midi,	50,597	10,008	82,043	5,359	11,836	94,508	1,185	4,608
							3,413	
							3,236	
— du Centre,	16,540	3,729	391	64	1,781	18,712	557	3,493
							6,692	
— de Portugal,	38,392	5,826	7,901	3,100	10,424	56,733	2,234	8,926
							3,667	
— d'Aragon,	45,102	5,718	1,397	388	5,458	51,957	2,439	6,106
							3,531	
— du Nord,	88,092	11,020	7,617	1,805	6,654	102,413	4,204	12,925
							1,268	
— de Catalogne,	28,553	1,368	1,153	153	5,305	30,095	253	1,521
							35,348	
Total,	262,276	37,669	80,502	10,869	41,452	354,418	13,190	48,538
							3,929	
Reinforcements,	17,861	3,929	81	—	981	18,423	3,929	52,467
							39,277	
General Total,	279,637	41,598	80,583	10,869	42,433	372,841	18,190	

—NAPIER, iv. 588, 589.

CHAPTER LXVII.

Note A, p. 308.

The following Table exhibits the comparative Height of the Alps, the Andes, and the Himalaya and Caucasus, the principal mountain ranges of Europe, America, and Asia:—

ALPS.	FEET.	ANDES.	FEET.	HIMALAYA AND ALTAI.	FEET.
Mont Blanc, . . .	15,781	Nevada di Sorata, . .	25,250	Tchamoulari, . .	26,894
Monte Rosa, . . .	15,685	Chimborazo, . . .	21,451	Dhavanindgiri, . .	26,462
Matterhorn, . . .	14,771	Caçambe, . . .	19,633	Tewahir, . . .	25,749
Col du Geant, . . .	11,274	Rio di Ilania, . . .	24,450	Himalaya, No 14, . .	23,453
Wetterhorn, . . .	12,518	Antisana, . . .	19,200	— 12, . . .	22,564
Finster-aar-horn, . .	14,116	Potopaxi, . . .	17,716	— 3, . . .	21,877
Jungfrauhorn, . . .	13,720	Popocatepetl, . .	17,716	Bukh-da-Vula, . .	21,775
Shreckhorn, . . .	13,387	Mont St Elias, . .	17,883	Pe chan (volcano), .	18,400
Great Glochner, . . .	13,713	Orizaba, . . .	17,390	Mont Bolor, . . .	18,600
Aiguille d'Argentiere, .	13,300	Pichincha, . . .	15,670	Belukha, Altai, . .	18,000
Greiner, Tyrol, . . .	10,500	Lake of Titicaca, . .	12,000	Ala-tau, . . .	11,000
Gletscherburg, St Gothard,	10,830	City of Rio Bamba, . .	10,800	Italitzkoi, . . .	11,524
Summit of Mont Cenis, .	11,460	Quito, . . .	9,515		
Summit of Little St Bernard, . . .	9,594	Toluca, . . .	8,818		
Col de la Seigne, . . .	8,071	Bogota de Santa Fe, . .	8,650	CAUCASUS AND TAURUS.	
Col de Bonhomme, . . .	8,025	Mexico, . . .	7,470	Ararat, . . .	15,000
Passage of Great St Bernard, . . .	7,967			El-Bours, Caucasus, .	15,027
Summit of do., . . .	11,006			Taurus, . . .	15,026
				Anti-Taurus, . . .	15,616
				Lebanon, . . .	10,989

Note B, p. 360.

TABLE showing the Commerce of the American States, before the Revolution, with Spain, and after it with Great Britain.

	1808.	1827.	1828.	1829.	1830.	1831.	1832.	1833.	1834.	1835.	1836.
IMPORTS OF	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Mexico,	5,250,000	622,800	307,029	303,562	978,441	728,858	199,821	421,487	459,610	402,820	254,822
Guatemala,	2,750,000	1,943	6,191					3,700	30,366	15,214	764
Columbia,	3,600,000	213,972	261,113	232,703	216,751	248,250	283,568	121,828	199,996	182,242	185,172
Buenos Ayres,	875,000	154,826	312,389	758,540	632,172	339,870	660,152	515,162	831,564	638,525	627,374
Chili,	1,875,000	409,134	709,371	818,930	540,626	631,627	718,199	816,817	896,221	606,176	861,903
Peru,	1,000,000	248,206	374,615	300,171	368,469	409,003	275,610	387,324	290,233	441,324	318,609
TOTAL with Spanish Colonies since the Revolution,	15,250,000	1,630,880	1,970,707	2,413,886	2,736,457	2,377,608	2,137,350	2,286,216	2,696,290	2,386,381	2,248,644
Brazil (Monarchical)		2,312,109	3,518,297	2,516,040	2,452,103	1,238,371	2,144,300	2,575,680	2,460,679	2,630,767	3,030,532

—HUMBOLDT, *Nouvelle Espagne*, iv. 153, 154. —PORTER'S *Progress of the Nation*, ii. 104.

This table exhibits only the imports of the South American Republics from Great Britain: but from the following table, it appears that the imports of Columbia from this country are about a third of its total imports; for they stood thus in 1829:—

	Imports.
France,	£35,530
Great Britain,	124,067
United States,	102,459
Germany,	117,174
Other States,	45,022
	<hr/> £424,992

—MALTE BRUN, xi. 45.

Assuming the total imports of the other South American Republics to bear the same proportion to those received from Great Britain that those of Columbia do, the imports from Great Britain must be somewhat more than tripled, to arrive at the total result. As the totals in the preceding table vary from £1,700,000 a-year to £2,500,000, this would serve to show that the total imports of the South American Republics, since their independence was established, varies from £5,000,000 to £7,500,000; or less than *half* of what their importations were from Europe before the Revolution.

Note C, p. 360.

Table showing the Gold and Silver raised and coined in Mexico and South America in every year from 1800 to 1836—
reduced to pounds Sterling from the Spanish dollars and marcs.

Year.	MEXICO.			BOLIVIA.			CHILI.			PERU.			GRAND TOTAL.
	Gold.	Silver.	Total.	Gold.	Silver.	Total.	Gold.	Silver.	Total.	Gold.	Silver.	Total.	
1800	157,433	3,579,702	3,737,135	—	—	—	—	—	—	75,571	870,714	935,415	5,567,266
1801	132,079	3,192,609	3,324,688	101,208	814,156	915,364	—	—	—	63,526	946,646	1,010,172	5,771,437
1802	127,624	3,191,805	3,319,429	68,591	883,643	952,234	—	—	—	67,416	828,433	895,849	5,703,287
1803	129,216	3,206,114	3,335,330	60,228	470,558	530,786	—	—	—	70,076	787,994	858,070	5,635,211
1804	131,695	3,286,134	3,417,829	106,827	695,134	801,961	—	—	—	70,503	868,047	938,550	5,689,561
1805	270,096	4,573,739	4,843,835	168,503	647,964	816,467	—	—	—	79,958	876,623	956,581	5,710,486
1806	302,469	4,573,739	4,876,208	133,757	734,163	867,920	—	—	—	43,555	869,538	913,093	5,653,443
1807	302,453	4,109,487	4,411,940	133,757	734,163	867,920	—	—	—	77,131	774,788	851,919	5,356,453
1808	326,005	4,140,797	4,466,802	121,496	681,196	802,692	186,369	83,551	269,920	68,076	828,730	896,806	5,163,038
1809	292,963	4,941,653	5,234,616	76,855	631,479	708,334	131,519	32,519	164,038	73,379	867,488	940,867	5,957,973
1810	219,063	3,713,343	3,932,406	146,188	651,544	797,732	173,117	32,432	205,549	68,069	828,536	896,605	5,697,353
1811	317,073	3,643,117	3,960,190	—	—	—	143,408	29,432	172,840	68,069	828,536	896,605	5,697,353
1812	83,457	1,799,779	1,883,236	26,761	738,161	764,922	133,473	70,733	224,205	115,014	777,157	892,171	4,718,354
1813	6,157	2,192,516	2,198,673	—	—	—	101,984	76,032	178,016	136,626	723,743	860,359	3,649,362
1814	123,614	2,192,516	2,316,130	—	—	—	138,441	98,416	236,857	154,177	739,733	893,910	3,767,719
1815	97,263	1,696,965	1,697,228	—	—	—	100,684	75,043	175,726	103,471	739,733	843,204	3,104,585
1816	102,079	1,915,619	2,017,698	389,137	381,923	771,060	119,625	107,367	226,992	155,703	677,711	833,614	2,998,068
1817	108,788	2,552,443	2,661,231	—	—	—	136,318	48,259	184,577	94,367	677,711	772,078	3,638,360
1818	107,785	2,552,443	2,660,228	—	—	—	110,635	43,739	154,374	103,471	677,711	781,182	3,657,236
1819	101,815	2,552,443	2,654,258	—	—	—	110,635	43,739	154,374	103,471	677,711	781,182	3,657,236
1820	101,815	2,552,443	2,654,258	—	—	—	110,635	43,739	154,374	103,471	677,711	781,182	3,657,236
1821	60,701	1,432,811	1,493,512	—	—	—	110,635	43,739	154,374	103,471	677,711	781,182	3,657,236
1822	43,686	1,432,811	1,476,497	—	—	—	110,635	43,739	154,374	103,471	677,711	781,182	3,657,236
1823	68,653	1,823,054	1,891,707	35,374	320,249	355,623	110,635	43,739	154,374	103,471	677,711	781,182	3,657,236
1824	69,638	1,872,478	1,942,116	22,369	290,280	312,649	110,635	43,739	154,374	103,471	677,711	781,182	3,657,236
1825	105,043	1,793,695	1,898,738	—	—	—	110,635	43,739	154,374	103,471	677,711	781,182	3,657,236
1826	46,439	1,675,296	1,721,735	—	—	—	110,635	43,739	154,374	103,471	677,711	781,182	3,657,236
1827	119,469	2,004,374	2,123,843	—	—	—	110,635	43,739	154,374	103,471	677,711	781,182	3,657,236
1828	127,541	1,988,297	2,115,838	—	—	—	110,635	43,739	154,374	103,471	677,711	781,182	3,657,236
1829	135,444	2,000,747	2,136,191	—	—	—	110,635	43,739	154,374	103,471	677,711	781,182	3,657,236
1830	53,414	2,465,763	2,519,177	—	—	—	110,635	43,739	154,374	103,471	677,711	781,182	3,657,236
1831	—	—	—	—	—	—	110,635	43,739	154,374	103,471	677,711	781,182	3,657,236
1832	—	—	—	96,196	381,208	477,404	11,187	1,375	12,563	80,383	457,368	537,751	2,689,279
1833	—	—	—	31,557	873,392	904,949	34,580	9,647	44,227	21,118	457,368	478,486	2,689,279
1834	42,377	2,365,785	2,408,162	—	—	—	34,580	9,647	44,227	18,406	477,183	495,589	2,689,279
1835	70,210	2,340,417	2,410,627	—	—	—	34,580	9,647	44,227	14,966	477,183	492,149	2,689,279
1836	114,723	2,296,365	2,411,088	—	—	—	104,713	9,751	114,464	32,795	597,968	630,763	2,689,279
1837	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1838	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1839	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1840	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1841	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1842	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1843	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1844	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1845	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1846	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1847	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1848	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1849	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1850	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1851	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1852	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1853	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1854	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1855	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1856	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

—PORTER'S Part. Tables, v. 170.

Note D, p. 360.

TABLE I.—Showing the decline of the paper circulation of Great Britain since 1810, when the Spanish revolution broke out—

Bank of England Notes in circulation.	Country Banks.	Commercial Paper under Discount at Bank.	
1800 £16,854,800	..	£ 6,421,900	1800
1801 16,205,280	..	7,905,100	1801
1802 15,196,880	..	7,523,300	1802
1803 15,849,980	..	10,747,600	1803
1804 17,077,850	..	9,982,400	1804
1805 17,871,170	..	11,265,500	1805
1806 17,730,120	..	12,380,100	1806
1807 16,950,680	..	13,484,600	1807
1808 14,182,860	..	12,950,100	1808
1809 18,542,860	..	15,475,700	1809
1810 21,019,600	..	20,070,600	1810
1811 23,369,220	..	14,355,400	1811
1812 23,408,279	..	14,291,600	1812
1813 22,219,930	..	12,330,200	1813
1814 24,801,080	£22,700,000	13,285,800	1814
1815 27,261,650	19,011,000	14,917,000	1815
1816 27,013,620	15,096,000	11,416,400	1816
1817 27,397,900	15,894,000	3,960,600	1817
1818 27,771,070	20,507,000	4,325,200	1818
1819* 25,227,100	15,701,328	6,515,000	*1819
1820 23,569,150	10,576,245	3,883,600	1820
1821 22,471,450	8,255,180	2,676,700	1821
1822 18,172,170	8,416,430	3,366,700	1822
1823 18,176,470	9,920,074	3,123,809	1823
1824 19,929,800	12,831,332	2,369,800	1824
1825 26,069,130	14,930,168	4,941,500	1825
1826 24,955,040	8,656,101	4,908,300	1826
1827 21,508,550	9,985,300	1,240,400	1827
1828 22,174,780	10,121,476	1,167,400	1828
1829 20,204,300	8,130,327	2,250,700	1829
1830 20,468,060	7,841,396	919,900	1830
1831 19,650,830	7,221,895	1,585,600	1831
1832 18,465,310	8,914,216		
1833 17,531,910	10,152,104	No returns after this.	
1834 18,571,810	10,659,828		
1835 18,215,220	11,134,414		

Whoever will reflect on this table, and recollect that at the time this vast diminution was going on, both in the gold and silver raised for the use of the whole globe by America, and in the paper circulation of the British islands, the interest of the national debt, and of all private debts, was a fixed money payment, and the population of the empire had advanced nearly forty per cent, and the exports, imports, and commercial tonnage more than doubled, will have no difficulty in seeing the real cause, both of the continued financial embarrassments, and the general distress of the industrious classes, and consequent wide spread of discontent in this country since the peace.—See MARSHALL, 55: PORTER'S *Parl. Tables*, ii. 7, iv. 7, v. 7.

TABLE II.—Showing the total produce of the Mexican mines from 1809 to 1821.

1809 .	£6,161,240	1816 .	£2,350,305
1810 .	4,961,217	1817 .	2,212,448
1811 .	2,510,450	1818 .	2,849,096
1812 .	1,102,314	1819 .	3,006,077
1813 .	1,533,490	1820 .	2,601,588
1814 .	1,982,639	1821 .	1,479,069
1815 .	1,760,655		

HUMBOLDT, *Nouvelle Espagne*, iii. 307.

* Payment in gold or silver reverted to at the Bank, by Act of Parliament, 49 Geo. III c. 471.

TABLE III.—Exhibiting at one view the Bullion annually raised and coined from the Spanish Mines, the Notes of the Bank of England, of Country Bankers, Commercial Paper under Discount at the Bank, Exports, Imports, Tonnage of Shipping, Population of Great Britain and Ireland, and Prices of Wheat, in every year from 1800 to 1836.

Year.	Prices of Wheat, Winchester, Ireland.	Population of Great Britain and Ireland.	Tonnage and Shipping.	Imports.	Exports, Produce and Manufactures.	Commercial Paper under Discount at Bank.	Country Bankers' Notes.	Bank of Eng-land Notes in circulation.	Raised and Coined in Spanish Mines.	Year.
s.	d.			L.	L.	L.	L.	L.	L.	
1800	126	—	1,965,438	26,257,781	33,381,617	6,343,900	—	16,851,800	5,507,896	1800
1801	128	—	1,702,749	31,786,353	32,987,684	7,383,100	—	16,905,880	5,507,896	1801
1802	76	15,513,646	1,813,256	28,683,111	32,622,609	7,383,300	—	15,186,880	5,176,957	1802
1803	78	—	1,753,766	28,683,111	32,622,609	10,547,300	—	15,849,980	5,082,227	1803
1804	81	—	1,753,766	27,819,533	32,376,941	9,889,400	—	17,077,850	5,038,211	1804
1805	81	—	1,645,132	26,561,270	32,376,941	11,265,300	—	17,871,170	7,104,436	1805
1806	75	—	1,517,371	26,869,638	32,861,879	13,390,100	—	17,730,130	6,502,443	1806
1807	76	—	—	26,734,435	32,861,879	13,390,100	—	16,950,680	5,356,453	1807
1808	69	15,942,460	—	26,734,435	32,861,879	13,390,100	—	14,182,880	6,169,038	1808
1809	90	—	—	31,730,557	32,542,374	15,475,700	—	21,019,600	6,987,853	1809
1810	101	—	2,072,244	32,301,613	34,061,901	20,070,600	—	23,368,230	4,778,584	1810
1811	95	17,596,803	—	26,163,431	32,681,400	14,355,400	—	23,408,279	3,649,353	1811
1812	105	—	—	—	30,508,508	13,291,600	—	23,219,830	3,784,560	1812
1813	119	—	—	—	—	13,395,600	—	24,801,650	3,687,243	1813
1814	78	—	1,869,535	33,735,264	34,297,233	14,217,600	—	24,801,650	3,687,243	1814
1815	63	—	2,119,063	32,987,366	42,575,966	11,421,600	—	27,013,680	9,589,068	1815
1816	62	—	1,795,188	27,431,604	35,717,070	11,421,600	—	27,013,680	9,589,068	1816
1817	104	—	2,070,132	30,884,388	40,711,887	3,869,600	—	27,771,070	3,481,475	1817
1818	64	—	2,245,851	30,776,810	32,531,176	6,235,300	—	27,771,070	3,858,935	1818
1819	76	—	2,245,851	30,776,810	32,531,176	6,235,300	—	27,771,070	3,858,935	1819
1820	64	—	2,115,671	30,438,680	30,305,685	3,858,935	—	27,771,070	3,858,935	1820
1821	54	21,391,463	1,965,220	30,792,760	40,931,744	9,676,700	—	27,771,070	3,858,935	1821
1822	48	—	2,131,237	30,500,084	44,266,533	3,366,700	—	22,471,450	9,877,487	1822
1823	40	—	2,323,455	35,798,707	43,894,373	3,123,900	—	18,173,170	9,680,403	1823
1824	59	—	2,556,761	37,502,935	46,375,551	4,941,500	—	18,173,170	9,680,403	1824
1825	65	—	3,103,790	44,137,453	47,166,080	2,269,500	—	26,089,130	2,367,498	1825
1826	53	—	2,644,746	37,686,113	40,965,735	4,906,300	—	24,955,040	2,367,498	1826
1827	63	—	2,859,763	44,887,774	52,219,280	1,249,400	—	21,508,550	2,367,498	1827
1828	50	—	2,798,977	46,088,505	52,219,280	1,249,400	—	21,508,550	2,367,498	1828
1829	73	—	2,894,828	43,981,317	56,313,041	2,269,700	—	21,508,550	2,367,498	1829
1830	54	22,562,791	2,668,570	46,345,341	61,140,964	1,865,600	—	19,685,830	2,589,273	1830
1831	67	—	3,241,927	46,345,341	61,140,964	1,865,600	—	19,685,830	2,589,273	1831
1832	57	—	3,515,969	44,686,811	60,683,543	—	—	18,465,310	3,587,736	1832
1833	57	—	3,515,969	44,686,811	60,683,543	—	—	18,465,310	3,587,736	1833
1834	1	—	3,132,168	49,362,811	69,989,330	—	—	17,531,910	3,587,736	1834
1835	39	—	3,309,784	49,362,811	75,376,731	—	—	18,315,220	2,947,514	1835
1836	36	23,890,800	3,494,373	67,023,867	69,265,937	—	—	—	—	1836

—PONTER'S *Progress of the Nation*, iii. 75-99 : *Tooke's on Prices*, ii. 380.

• Records destroyed by fire.

